Jno T. W. Ware

WRESTLING AND WAITING

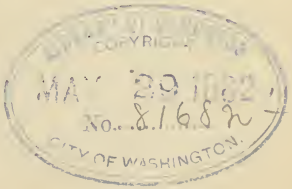
SERMONS

BY

JOHN F. W. WARE

"Hold in, hold on, and hold out!"

J. F. W. W.



BOSTON

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INTRODUCTION.

JOHN FOTHERGILL WATERHOUSE WARE, the son of Henry Ware, Jr., and Elizabeth Watson Waterhouse, was born in Boston, Aug. 31, 1818, and died in Milton, Feb. 26, 1881. A graduate of Harvard College in the class of 1838, and of the Cambridge Divinity School in 1842, he was minister of Unitarian churches in Fall River, Cambridgeport, Baltimore, and Boston, successively. In the latter city, he was the successor of Dr. Channing and Dr. Gannett, and had charge of the Arlington Street Church, formerly located in Federal Street.

Those who knew him in life remember him. Those who knew him not will find him at his truest in these sermons. The pulpit is the preacher's confessional. The anointed of his people know how to receive and shrive him there. The sermons brought together in this

book do not give an adequate idea of the scope and richness of his ministry. His work surpassed his word, strong as that was. Home and camp, church and school, acknowledge his helping hand. The rich and the poor thank and bless him. To the home, he has given *Home Life*, a book which is a grateful memorial of his youth, a witness of his manhood, and now a keepsake which will long maintain his ministry by the fireside. His "white tracts," as the soldiers called them, flew in and out the camp like the doves of the old Arsenal. He also revised and republished the *Silent Pastor*, for use in the hospitals. He labored for the Church, as a son honoring his father and his mother, filial love blending ever with missionary zeal. The freedmen remember what he did for their education and uplifting.

A few friends, believing that the word which had helped them would help others, have chosen these sermons and published them. Nor would they disavow a loyal impulse to offer some tribute to the memory of the faithful pastor, true friend, and honest man. They know that the only honor he would value is the privilege of

further ministry. In hours of pain and weakness, he never gave up the hope of preaching again. If, with God's blessing, this book only half fulfils his longing for further service on the earth, it will wholly accomplish the purpose and hope of its compilers.

GEORGE LEONARD CHANEY.

BOSTON, March 26, 1882.

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[May 4, 1879.]

I.

WRESTLING AND WAITING.

"I will not let thee go except thou bless me."— GENESIS xxxii., 26.

I WONDER if this experience of Jacob by the brook Jabbok may not have been somewhat akin to that of Jesus in the wilderness. It is impossible really to know anything about it; but do they not each in some sense represent the personal conflict of two young men coming up to face the first great crisis of life,— a wrestling with the great fate that confronts them, a struggle for that moral, mental supremacy and calm which we all feel the need of as we first actually meet that life for which we have been preparing? In the wrestling of the night, in the temptation of the wilderness, each man may recognize his own experience. They are very human incidents, and do not require the ordinary bald, literal interpretation to make them solemn and effective. As allegories, epitomizing universal experience, they are of as true value as if they were statements of fact.

Fleeing from his exacting father-in-law, Jacob had approached the place where he knew that his brother Esau had established himself. Naturally uneasy at this fact,— for he had not forgotten how he had cheated him out of his birthright or how he had afterward

defrauded him of his blessing,— he sends messengers to him, who were to address him in terms of respect. Esau, without sending any reply, sets out immediately to meet his brother. More anxious than ever, Jacob divides his herds and his servants into two bands, separated by wide interval, so that, in case of attack, that which was behind and with which his household was might escape, at the same time again sending servants forward with a gift taken from the choicest of his flocks and of his herds. It was while awaiting the result of this embassage that the incident from which the text is taken occurred.

The last division of herds had passed over the brook by which he had encamped, and Jacob was left alone. And it was night. Plenty of work for conscience to do, as it is apt to be when night brings us to face a foe-coming morrow. And Jacob had much in his past connection with his brother for conscience to busy itself about. It was the great hazard moment of his life, and there were conditions to the problem of which he was not the master. He was a very unhappy man, and sorely perplexed. Then there appeared to him, as the Scripture says, a man who wrestled with him a large part of the night. In some way, Jacob was seriously injured. His thigh was dislocated or strained. Crippled, he was not mastered; and, the day beginning to dawn, his antagonist desired to be released. Somehow, he seems to have been in Jacob's power, could only get away by Jacob's consent (which ought to shut out the ordinary belief that his antagonist was the Divine Being himself). Jacob has the power of dictating terms,— the condition of the conqueror. His reply is, "I will not

let thee go except thou bless me." We simply do not know anything about this incident, the narrative of which starts a flood of unanswerable questions; and it were better to hasten to get our moral from the words, than to linger over possible or impossible interpretations of the event.

The simple elements of the incident are these,—a contest between Jacob and an adversary, in which the adversary gets the worst of it. He is resisted, held, and in place of any proposed mischief is compelled to bless. The incident is striking, the lesson invaluable.

For here, in epitome, is human experience. Jacob may stand for you and for me, for any, for every man; and the antagonist for our baser selves and the baser things of the world, and the wrestling, the struggle that has to go on between us. We grow up to that point where we are to undertake the handling of ourselves. That certain shield which home has been, that certain support, guide, which parents have been, expires by limitation. We cease being child, we begin to be man. The bars are thrown back through which we have gazed at the field of life, while they have restrained us from entering. We enter. As we pass the line, we at once meet opposition; and our first work, duty, experience, is resistance. We are at once put at task, at the task life keeps us at ever after. It would be very pleasant could this first part be only a sort of school-boy's holiday, in which we could wander here and there over the field, and pick up every joy. We would like to throw an idle hook in this stream, lie under that tree, enjoy the sweet do-nothing, letting our eyes lazily rest themselves on sky and earth, refreshing

and informing the other senses, taking in the keen, but superficial, relish of all the novel wonders about us. It is not at holiday we are put, but at school, and our masters are hard and exacting. We may not doze and dream and get an animal fill of pleasure first. First we have to go to work, and our first work is hard work. Inexperienced and ignorant, timid and weak, we are called upon to resist the subtlest foes of the soul. If we take the Book of Genesis, the first duty to which the first man is called upon is the duty of resistance. Before he does anything, he must resist somebody. If we take the Gospels, they repeat the story. Before Jesus goes out to do, he retires to resist. Resistance — the negative, the opposite of will — is our primary obligation. The young possibilities of virtue seem to be so nurtured. We have to get strong, assured in our resisting powers, before we can essay anything by way of progress. Before we grow, we must be able to stand, and overcome the powers that would not have us stand.

There are many things that will put themselves in the way of a growing soul, many that must be at once met and resisted. At first, we have not-helps. The mission of things seems to be not to help you live, but to force your death; not to establish, but to overthrow. It is not that hindrances strew the way,— obstacles you might expect to meet and to have to surmount,— but more than hindrances, positive, virulent opponents. All the way up, through the various grades of nature, existence seems to be a struggle, a fight for itself. Nothing is cradled, but everything attacked. Nurse, care, afterward; at first, hindrance, opposition, things to be learned which other things seem bound to prevent

your learning. Once establish yourself, and you get help, friends; reach for and receive support. Nothing can be drearier than the first life of the seed in the cold and dark, its way to make against hindrance. If you go into a garden or a field some days after your sowing, you will see how the great vigor of tiny shoots has pushed aside the earth crust, perhaps has lifted a lump of dirt, or a chip, or a stone,— how it has overcome resistance, is born by virtue of that into beauty and light.

Once established, once in the light, things begin to consent, become friends. So with our virtues. The law seems to be resistance as the condition of taking root, of becoming established, of growth. We do not begin and just grow easily and pleasantly, but through all sorts of pains and aches and mishaps,— the frictions, jars, antagonisms of other things. Our moral hindrances naturally divide themselves into two classes,— those from within, self-born, nurtured, grown; those from without, which have no self about them. If it were worth while to stop long enough to say it, one might perhaps say that the self things are the more obstinate, while they perhaps are less recognized, watched, controlled. The things that go wrong with us, the self-hindrances, are largely matters of temperament; and temperament is a thing never entirely original, but largely of inheritance: it is the twist to my nature, the thing I find in me and that starts me the me that I am. If I understand myself at all, my great trouble as a moral being is with a certain something which goes by this name. As I understand it, it is the sub-structure of my whole being. It underlies my life, my thinking,

and my doing. There is a peculiarity native to me, as sap to the tree or blood to the body, which shapes my thoughts and methods, my hopes and my deeds. It has its felicities, it has its infelicities. No man's temperament is wholly the one or the other. The felicities we set aside. We do not want them now. The infelicities are our concern. What is to be done with them? Shall I yield to them, and say: "This is my temperament. I cannot help myself. I obey the dictates of nature?" Obedience to nature is very well where the dictates are all right; but, where they are wrong, they are to be disobeyed, just as any wrong thing is. That is what we live for. Temperament is amenable to the laws of discipline. Its imperiousness, its tyranny, is to be resisted. The unlovely is to be grown away from, the lovely grown into,—two distinct processes. Jacob resisted his opponent; but he did more. He held him. The unruly part of temperament is to be more than resisted: it is to be held hard, and turned at last into an ally, a friend. A blessing, it is to be held until it bless. There is an illustration of what temperament may become when its bad is well ruled and its good is master, in the apostle John. In his early discipleship, he belongs to a club called "Sons of Thunder," loud-mouthed, noisy, restless, revolutionary men, the Socialists, the Nihilists of their day,—wants the lightning to destroy the Samaritans. He is as hot and impulsive and rash as Peter.

In the maturer days of his intercourse with Jesus, he lays his head upon that sainted bosom, becomes the Christ's special favorite, and in his mid-life and old age is as the microcosm of gentleness and love,

It is not that a new nature, a new being, is given him through his changed faith, but that he has through his faith so worked upon that ardent, vindictive temperament, has so resisted, chastened, held it, that it has ended not merely in blessing others, but himself. He has done that most radical, difficult thing,— not destroyed his temperament, not got another one, which no man can ever do, for it is that which bases individuality and keeps one man from being like every other man,— but he has held the inimical thing in his temperament until he has wrung from it a blessing. He is the John he is not by inheritance, not through force of temperament, not by an act of nature, but by a resolute self-culture that has whipped the offending Adam out, and has supplanted the natural, inherited, by a broader, braver, better, sweeter self. I do not know anywhere a more striking illustration of what may be done at the very root of things where one really takes hold. It is overturn, it is annihilation, it is rooting out the bad and overgrowing the place of it with the good, and making the other things of the temperament the sweeter and the stronger. In that way, not merely may adversities be made friends, but self-antagonisms be changed to blessings. What we need all through is the attitude, the endurance, of that midnight wrestler by the brook Jabbok. We may be wounded, crippled, bear the mark of bruise and scar of wound, feel it our lives long, though we may not show it. But we are the conquerors, and the vanquished thing has made us over; has been compelled not only to yield, but to do that thing so doubly hard for a vanquished foe,— bless.

So it is with the whole catalogue of the self things,— passions, appetites, prejudices, dislikes, habits. The thing we really ought to do with them is to turn them in to do better work. We do not readily see it that way. They are imperative, and mean to control, and we get an easy habit of letting them. If we get brave enough to make some trial of ourselves against them, we soon give over. We tell children to try and then try again. That is at the basis of domestic training, and it is the trying again that makes the child. We who are mature do not do as we tell children. We do not try. We do not resist. We become impatient, despairing, give up. Giving up is the most unhappy thing a man does. To give up is to take one's life, is to win curse, not blessing. One is never to give up, but to hold on and to hold out, and compel the beatitude which comes of healthy struggle, though he should not reach that which comes of a complete victory. These and all troublesome things within us have great capacity to bless, only we do not yield to them, only we make them feel us.

Beside self-hindrances are others from outside, and very various. They are to be treated the same way, made to yield the same reward.

In every day, we have disappointments,— common, trifling, troubling things. Life is a good deal made up of them. They are its severest trials. We bear great things with at least a show of equanimity. We break under little ones. If we know there is something serious, we muster our energies and face it. But little, annoying things which spring at us from the wayside, from unexpected corners, at most unwelcome

moments, just at the time of all others when we fancied all going smoothly, just where we can least brook opposition, postponement, or delay,—these every one feels to be serious annoyances of life, and of no special use. But suppose,— instead of fretting and disappointment over the rain that keeps you indoors, over the dinner that is not ready or is badly cooked, over the man who is not punctual, over the investment that does not pay, over annoyance of domestic or child,— instead of scolding and fuming about the present, immediate form of the trial, you hold it, study it, reason about it, look at it every way, turn it over on all sides, and see if something cannot be made of it, if there be not some fine gold there. Instead of taking these into your temper, suppose you take them into your heart, and hold them there till all shadow of the ugliness of temper is melted away, and the blessing comes,— the blessing that as surely comes, under these conditions, as the blessings of sunlight and spring breezes come after the fret of east winds, and low leaden clouds, and dull rains or hasty showers. Suppose one were to make it, not a principle only, but a habit, to hold on to every trying and adverse thing until it blesses, plucking away the disguise beneath which lies the beatitude! It would not be long before all these wearing, worrying irritations would be transformed into angels of light, teaching the once captious spirit great and solemn truths, and leading it into gentleness, patience, and forbearance. Every one of us who has had any self-discipline knows what has come to himself out of the most hopeless elements in him, simply through handling them wisely, compelling

them to do good work. Every such one knows how, out of the little irritations and vexations of life, once, like the little foxes of the field, destroying all that was fair and manly, he has made great blessings; and you will generally find the happiness and security of maturer life to lie just where hard wrestling has wrung blessings out of hostile things. Then there are a thousand things in one's intercourse with others which are unpleasant, vexatious, irritating. Some men and women are merely annoyances, aversions. We don't see why they were made, or why they should themselves care much to live. They make us feel uncomfortable, if they come near us. They cross our paths every way, and if we cross over to the other side, they cross over too. They contrive to run counter to our wishes, to set themselves against our prejudices, to throw ridicule upon our principles, to set things awry, to be every way repellent, to offend our tastes or somehow to be only disagreeable. And, where things do not run to this extreme, there still is much in every-day intercourse, at home and with friends, which puts us into an uncomfortable humor, and makes us wish ourselves well rid of such society. This is the first, the outside feeling, and too frequently the only and the lasting one. It does only and purely harm more to ourselves than to them. Let a man become conscious of the folly of allowing the petty annoyances of character or conduct to have so much influence over him. Let him resist the annoyance, hold it till he sees how, by that very antagonism, some good thing is drawn out and strengthened in himself, or some bad thing avoided. Let him hold it till out of

the ashes of aversion shall spring a true, courteous regard, till he find a blessing in that which had been only a plague. For myself, I confess that, among the people of worth whom I have known, not a few were those with whom my first intercourse was unpleasant, and my first impressions repulsive. And I have no small self-rebuke at that want of moral steadfastness which neglects to hold back the crude or unpleasant opinion, that lack of fidelity to conviction which allows me still to refuse to hold the man till I find the blessing in him.

The truth will bear to be carried higher, among the great troubles and sorrows of life,— the sorrows in which, long time, the stricken spirit can discern no light. Nothing would seem,— did we not know it by experience,— nothing does seem to many still so utterly impossible as that any blessing can come of sorrow. Of none of Christ's Beatitudes are we so skeptical as of that which promises blessing to them that mourn. And yet, hold sorrow till its more selfish aspect passes, till it turn its religious side to you, till time and experience and faith do their work, till you feel, not its gloom, but its glory; not its storm, but its peace; not its loss, but its gain; not its cross, but its crown. Do not, through any device, lose its sanctifying influence, the greatest loss the soul can meet. Do not flee from it, or seek to smother it, or yield to it, but hold it,— hold it till it blesses, till you have consecrated it by prayer and submission, till all other views grow dim, and only its religious side, its heavenly side, God's side, is toward you. Keep it till it bless, though it long delay, and you will then see how, out

of seeming evil, God educes good; how, out of the darkness of earth, he brings the light ineffable of heaven; how, as night precedes day, so sadness and suffering precede peace; how, as day issues from night, peace from trouble comes.

That surely is a mysterious, but not the less real, power of blessing which lies within every well contested, rightly borne trouble. He knows but little who supposes that, if there is to be a blessing in his earthly lot, he shall at once detect it, as he would who, searching for gold, should look to find it scattered liberally upon the surface. The things of permanent value are mostly hidden,—have to be sought. Did not he of old entertain angels unawares,—only know them, get their blessing, as they departed? Did not Jesus walk with his disciples, and only as he left them did they see that the crucified was risen? And does not God still hold men's eyes, and behind disguises conceal the ultimate good? In lesser things, man has learned the divine law. The pure and glittering metal lies in the dull ore. The diamond's coat is rough, uttering no prophecy of the wealth beneath. Forbidding forms enclose choicest souls. Only as one perseveres, gets through the crust, knocks off the covering, or penetrates beneath the surface, is it that the true worth is revealed. The form of trial, harsh and repulsive, and all its earlier manifestations setting strongly against a man's desire and will, makes him feel that it is only trial, only pain,—takes him on his lower side, his selfish, his earthly side. He may resist it because his nature prompts, or he thinks it duty, or because he feels that, if he do not, it will destroy him.

He does not see beyond the necessity, the impulse of resistance; and the resistance is that dogged, soulless resistance wherewith so many confront their lot. It must be borne; and he will set himself to bear it. It must be met; and he will set himself to meet it. But, as to any good in it, any blessing to be got out of that harsh and repulsive fact, any yield from it beyond a dogged bearing, he does not see it. If it be a serious thing, he may grow rebellious and question God's right or God's love. Let him, however, set himself to bear in a real child-spirit. By degrees, slow and uncertain at first, the painful pressure is relaxed a little. The shades are a little less dark. A possible good begins to be suspected. Then it is half-confessed, till finally, if he will but hold it long enough, he will find that this crushing thing, which was only gloom and only harm, has its bright and holy side, and where misery came blessings are left. The very thing which rose in its terrible might, and seemed about to sweep him from the earth, against which he had feared to measure his puny strength, is found to be a priceless good.

"Surely," said one writing me who knew something of greater as lesser trial, "it is only our fault if we do not turn the hard trials into blessings; and I take shame that the things which were sent to sweeten I have so much allowed to embitter me." That statement grasps and holds the great truth and the great confession. We yield or resist, and are only embittered; we hold, and grow sweet; and where the sweetness is established, the beatitude follows. The secret of successful living is to extract blessings out of all

conditions, to compel of them that. God does not lay them upon the surface, and sometimes he buries them deep. You may not know where the blessing lies except by search, weary and baffling many times. Where it seems most useless, there oftentimes is its most blessed reward. Learn the wisdom to hold everything till it bless, though ill be heaped on ill. Make every discipline what the brook Jabbok was to Jacob,— the place of conquest and blessing. Let nothing go till you have probed it well, and got the uttermost of blessing, as the bee does not desert the bitterest flower till she gets the last drop of sweetness from it. Never withhold searching because it seems of no avail. Search as the woman did for her money, as the shepherd did for his sheep, as the seeker did for his goodly pearl,— till you find. Having found, hold as Jacob did, and there shall be nothing in life, however frowning, hostile, baffling, which shall not have for you a blessing,— a blessing you would not surrender, a blessing you in no other way could attain.

May 4, 1879.

II.

WHAT SUFFICETH?

"Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth."—JOHN xiv., 8.

I HAVE always felt the incident with which the text is connected to be one of deepest pathos. The air of gentle, suffering tenderness which invests this scene, as the whole language of that last interview, seems to deepen just here; and the little dialogue that introduces, and in part shapes the after-talk, is as exquisitely true to nature as touching in itself.

I think that either you or I would have said just what Thomas did. It was an outspoken piece of honesty. He really did not know whither Jesus was going; and it was confidence in his Master, and not doubt, that made him say so. More confused men probably were never gotten before so great a fact; and it was just as natural for Philip — and again you and I might have done the same — to say at the next point Jesus made: "Why, now there is really something! Only show us the Father, and that is enough." And I think the very grave way in which Jesus met them, with a tenderly pained surprise, with a something in tone and look which was not rebuke, while it had a dash of disappointment about it, helped to steady them all, keep their tongues quiet, and their ears alert, and their minds active, receptive, if they failed of being wholly sympathetic.

The showing of the Father was the whole mission of Jesus, his one aim, his life's work. Never was that other or less; never was it other or more. The one thing was to manifest not the *being* of God, which was an already established fact with his nation, but the *character* of God, which they never had understood, which they of that generation were understanding very much less than such men as Isaiah and Daniel — men of the most spiritual insight under the old dispensation — did. It was with faith when Jesus came a good deal as with art when Raphael came, with the Church when Savonarola from within and Luther from without attempted its reform, — a time of grotesque deterioration, falseness and deadness, when the name of a great thing covered only ghastly and foul decay. Even the Jehovistic idea of God was very much degenerated, and may be said to have had little real following. The idea one man has of another is betrayed by the manner of his intercourse with him; and, more than by any language, we reveal through the methods of our intercourse our interior conception of God. The Jew of Christ's time was a ritualist, the most servile believer in and follower of form, a formalist so rank and so mean as to always have had only the Saviour's contempt. Growing out of his formalism, its inevitable concomitant, was self-righteousness; and to be self-righteous is inevitably to be hypocrite. The brave old prophet had said that God could not bear the sacrifice of bulls and of rams, and another as brave had added just what God did desire. All that had been displaced, and the tradition of the elders, abrogating the sure word of God, taught the cleanliness of the outside of cups and platters, in the

place of the service of the pure spirit and its pure worship. The Being who was to be served, to be satisfied, to be reached through such methods, could of course be in popular conception only a sort of Baal, an idol of a graver kind. You might use the most accredited phrase in speaking of God,— it signified nothing so long as in men's hearts and in men's approach there was no savor of him. So Jesus had to begin with showing *what* God was. Not *who*, so much as *what* his task. He was to show God in his real character. He was to place before men the attitude in which he stood toward his creatures, to teach his real relation, and in what true intercourse with him consisted; not to teach the rudiments of a divine law,— that had been Moses' work; not to pursue mental subtleties and discriminations,— that had been the rabbis' work; not to read the stars,— that had been the work of Chaldeans and astrologers; not to make investigation into the great occult realm of nature's many-chambered laboratories,— that was in reserve for Tycho Brahe and Kepler and Da Vinci, Newton, Cuvier, Agassiz, and all the host of them. All these for other men, some of them for other times. In these he had no part, with these no interference. Simple and unlearned in the world's way, as the world's lore, his one limited work was to show the Father, to shred away the feeble as the false which obscured the glory of the divine countenance, and make men see in himself the reflected attributes of the infinite unseen. Working the works of Him that sent him, stating and unfolding his truths, shaping conduct always into glad and facile subservience to the divine will, he who had really seen him had seen

the Father, had seen his power manifest in the works done, his love in the tender forbearance, sympathy, and forgiveness shown, his truth in the wonderful and gracious words that had fallen from lips anointed only with truth; and by these three, work, word, and life, had made such manifestation of the Great One as no vision of mere person could ever have given. It is not seeing the *person* that makes us realize his character, his relation to us, *him*. The world had never been wiser or better, had the form of Jesus been the veritable showing of the person of God. The world is better for its assurance that in these things Jesus showed, manifested, reflected that of God which the soul most craves to know, *what* he is, and how he feels toward us. The bewildered Philip still asked for the showing of the person. But that would not have sufficed, though he thought so. He who could not see the Father in the Son would have got only the lowest, the most transient impression, had the Great Being vouchsafed to stand before him in all the inconceivable majesty of his glory.

What I want to say to-day is that, while the teaching, the sufficiency of the gospel, is the grand doctrine of the divine Fatherhood,—and blessed forevermore be our God and Father because it is so!—we must school ourselves to recognize that it is also its limitation. As we grow into other knowledges, we must not consent to outlaw God from them, and feel that only in the Bible does he speak, only by revelation is he revealed. The Bible does but a partial work; and, when you have exhausted it, a great deal is left unknown. Whole invaluable provinces of thought-knowledge are left un-

touched. God is the great Economist, and he teaches but one thing at a time. The nail he drives is driven home and clinched before he strikes another. That is one reason why his work stands. To Jesus was delegated the grandest duty ever intrusted to man. Other men had been, have been sent for other things,— each for his work. This was his. And no man can say but he has done it utterly. We have nothing more to ask in that direction, however inquisitive or impatient in others. It suffices. The showing of the Father is complete,— perfect after its kind. But it does not exhaust God. It does not suffice us as seekers after God. The gospel showing of God as the Father is not sufficient to meet the wants of the man of civilization, culture, faith, who cannot be satisfied with words or facts shut up in a book, but burns to know the all possible about him. The gospel does not put him before us as the ALL that he is. It does not give all of him we may know, and shall be happier and better for knowing. God is something beside Father,— may we not say better than Father? And we must learn to see that, and be brave to speak it, and accept and welcome every investigation of human thought, not fearful lest it weaken the hold and lead away from revelation, but rejoicing in anything that, by broadening our conceptions of an infinite knowledge and power, shall lead us up to a thought we can by no possibility reach when God stands before us only in the parental attitude.

God is something other than a Father. Grand and elevating as that conception is, it meets and satisfies the religious sentiment; but there is something — a

vast, vast deal — that it does not cover, does not meet and satisfy; and ministers in their preaching, as men in their lives, miss it that they do not confess it. When the man of clear brain and devout heart stands by you and shows you the evidence of the divine reason and handiwork in every minutest tracery of the human frame, in what the microscope reveals, as in what the telescope unveils, and goes step by step before you, leading your groping way among the winds and leads of the divine thought and purpose, while with every advance you feel yourself consciously approaching the centre and source, it comes with great force to you that there is really something of most moment to our best conception of the Infinite which our gospel leaves out, and that man must have the co-ordinate testimony and revealing of many-handed, many-voiced nature, before he can really hold an any way adequate idea of God.

When I am thinking of and trying to comprehend the Eternal and Infinite One, I cannot, with Philip, say, "Shew me the Father, and it sufficeth." What I want to be shown is *God*,— God not in any limited relation, though it be the highest, but God in his wholeness, whatever and all of him, not too high for me to attain to,— God in mind, in matter, in space, in time; God under all aspects as under one aspect. Why should Christian teaching seek to rule him out of these? What *are* mind, matter, what have they done that they may not interpret him, that they must be alien? They know and tell what Gospels do not, cannot. It does not suffice me to know God is my Father, though you bring me, to help out and empha-

size the gospel word, the everything of every human tongue or pen or brain which has sought to express the wonder and the happiness and the condescension of that connection. There is something that, more and more as I grow into experience and knowledge, I feel is to be said of him, known of him, and must be said and known, which it is not in the power of gospel word to disclose or the strictly parental idea to embrace, which can only be disclosed as the humble, teachable, reverent soul draws toward and finds the God everywhere immanent.

If God be only Father, if that be all there is to such a Being, the showing of Jesus is sufficient: I would be content. But when I find that my teacher himself did not confine his thought or teaching exclusively to that; when I find him, through the lily and the grass and the sparrow and the mustard-seed, leading me to see a great working Providence, teaching me to look for and find tokens of him in spheres outside his parental relation, and in those an added grace and power and dearness; when I find that Jesus evidently fed and refreshed his faith by converse with the Great Spirit of Nature, that he himself held relations and received instruction in other than the sharply restricted filial way; when I find him going back to the old-time history and recognizing the Jehovah power of rule and law and restraint as part and parcel of the great one purpose,— I can but say that God is *more*, and I want to know the *more* of God, not only for the knowledge' sake, not only for the knowing him, but that my idea of him *as Father* may be fed and broadened and intensified, become glowing and transfusing. I know him

more, I love him better, my conception is grander for the things I know of him that cannot be embraced within the narrow compass of the one tie. To me always there has seemed as the type of a satisfied faith the good old New England grandmother living in her small way on some back road of some unknown village, laying her Bible aside at the setting of the Sunday's sun with her spectacles in it for the next week's mark, in the utter and blissful confidence that every minutest word of the book was written by the very finger of God, and came down out of heaven to man. And yet there is a sublime faith and a more restful assurance and a more solemn thought of the Great One as one makes him out to be the informing life of all that is. When I follow the keenest analysis down to the ultimate,— to "organisms without organs," the simplest of all observed, the simplest of all imaginable organism, so simple as a little lump of an albuminous combination of carbon, the ultimate that human research gives us as the origin and cause of life,— and there I find the bars up, and the awful word creeping upon me, "And what next?" and the as awful answer out of infinite distances and infinite silences,— God; when I take history, and, all the way down among the affairs of men, I trace a something that is not man, or current of time, or drift of event, but a power somehow setting aside and overruling, balancing and compensating, lifting ages and races, and advancing against all retrogrades the harmonies of humanity, making of the confusions of man, as once of the chaos of matter, order and beauty and growth and success and life; when I get the last word of philosophy, the farthest

bound of reason, and over the waste and desolate and unfathomable beyond, as next thing possible, comes the assurance, God; — why, I am wholly a grander man. I have got a grander faith, my God is more than my Father, and my Father seems all the more adorable, because, besides his loving care for little me, and the myriads beside me who are little, besides his mercy and his forgiving, he is all this,—all this to other things, and my Father, too. It does not take a bit from the Scripture revealing, but it adds immeasurable things to it; and I may stand beside the ignorant and confiding grandmother, and feel that though she be spared many dark moments and grave questionings, yet that mine is, after all, *the* faith, and I in triumph can look around me and above, and in proud yet humble trust exclaim, "These are thy glorious works, Parent of good." "My Father made them all."

You have only to bring this home to yourself by asking, "In what way do I really get the completest idea of my earthly father?" "By regarding him solely in that relation or by trying to know all about him in his various relations,— his connection with other men and things."

For myself, I know this: that I take my all of memory of my father in all his love and care for me,— in companionship, in affection, in discipline, in advice, in example,— the everything that in the tie of blood and the relations of intercourse involved the parental connection, and, when I have exhausted all, it comes to me that, dear as he was,— completely my father,— that relation did not exhaust *him*. There was ever so much more that he was; and when I know what others

have to say among whom he moved in duties, labors, sympathies outside the more narrow, if most sacred, precincts of home, he is in every way an exalted being. It is not the mere fatherly that I know, but the so much that cannot be included in that idea at its highest. I turn that thought, that experience, Godward. A good being has come to earth, and virtually said: "Men have been mistaken all along. There is but one God, and that God is not the jealous and vindictive king, the hard, unreasonable, selfish Jehovah that my own countrymen have conceived; but he is a Father, — my Father, their Father. And that I am come to teach." And the followers of the good Teacher, taking him up more narrowly than he had purposed, have made it the aim of their teaching to impress upon men what they conceived the Bible to tell, many of them clinging to the Old Testament idea, while using the New Testament language, letting Old Testament spirit pervade it, and saying "Father" when they only saw and feared the "king." And it has been a wrong, a danger, and a crime, to think of him elsehow or elsewhere, to work for any other feature or attribute or revealing, except along the line of Scripture phrase. Men have scowled upon and forbade any foray into the great realm of Nature so vocal of God to Jesus, and have trembled lest somehow it should be discovered that there was some contradiction between what he had said in his creation and what he had said by his Christ. They have compelled the human soul to look at God only under a single aspect, and in consequence, to our Christian faith, to our Christian conception of God, everything is wanting but that which

has a special Bible sanction; and we have one whom we call by the very sublimest names, of the greater part of whose sublimity we keep ourselves wilfully ignorant, who, as merely the Father, is almost as much wronged as by being merely Jehovah.

It is the very dearest, brightest, happiest thought that the Great Infinite holds this parental relation to me, that I am his child; but more and more, as I go, I know — as I know it of my earthly father — that it is impossible to shut the whole of God within that relationship; and that, wherever else you find him, and whatever else you may have to say about him, instead of veiling or confusing that first grand idea, it only sheds a purer lustre about it. It is not the Father minus anything, but it is the Father plus something, when the heavens add their declaration, and the firmament shows his handiwork, and day unto day and night unto night, through every part of his boundless dominion, bear witness, not to his design, his work alone, but to what is infinitely beyond and quite other, — to Himself.

And it seems to me that the privilege of this later day is that, in so much deeper and grander way than the poet knew when he wrote it, we may look "through Nature up to Nature's God," — not Nature's God merely, our God, nay, our "Father"; may come to see that the things of her domain are not the workmanship of mere power, wisdom, will, but that they all carry with them the subtler element of love, knit themselves back to that same one whom Jesus called Father. And if so be this fair universe of things has not its ultimate in our human prosperities, delights,

and elevation, if the great purpose be beyond and other than for these inhabitants of earth and time, as may well be in such vast concerns as God's, still are we sharers in it all, helped by it all, elevated through it all, and by all brought into the innermost presence. It is that we want, whatever will so enlarge the vision of our souls as to bring God out of distance into presence; and what can more do it than the reverent teaching of the imprints he has ever left along every way that his spirit has passed, so that the ardent seeker, striking into unknown discoveries, may stray nowhere but he shall see that God has been there before him, and if God, then — power, reason, wisdom, will, love, the Father. It is one thing to grasp the idea that God made and holds all, and another that all that God made and holds repeat and confirm the truth that the Father did all this as he did the works by which he was manifest through Jesus. The interweaving of that thought with all that is is that which best interprets him. I never touch Nature anywhere. I never hear the word that wise seekers bring out of silences and distances, out of secret microscopic or telescopic lurking-places, that I do not feel how many are the unnoticed messengers and ministries awaiting us, and how mistaken we are who go deaf and blind through this vast museum, like the dead soul of Peter Bell.

> "A primrose by the river's brim
> A yellow primrose was to him,
> And it was nothing more."

Oh that we might see the primrose, as Jesus saw the lily,— the messenger, the interpreter, the child of

the one Great Spirit, over all, and through all, and in all! Oh that we might catch the harmonies that pulse through all things, chanting their consenting ascription of glory and honor and dominion and majesty to the one creating and ruling Wisdom, till man should feel that through every star, through every grass-blade, as through every living soul, "the glory of a present God still beams," that God, the God and Father of all things as of Jesus Christ, our Lord, of whom, from whom, in whom are we all.

III.

DAY UNTO DAY.

"Day unto day uttereth speech."— PSALMS.

EVERY yesterday is talking to, instructing, to-day. Every to-day has its word for the morrow. So each individual life progresses, so ages ripen. It is not what is new-born. Born to-day,—that is our hope, our power, our weakness, or our defeat. We *live in* and *because of* yesterdays. Their life enters into ours. They are our nurses, our instructors. They have had us by the hand, led us step by step, little by little unfolding to us the work before, and giving little by little the helps unto its accomplishment. In nothing is the law of sequence more inevitable. In nothing does that which *is* more depend upon that which *was*. In nothing does the next step more directly hinge upon the last. Not only yesterday speaks to to-day, but what yesterday *says* decides what to-day *is*. He lives well and wisely who has the speech of each day as it goes, who hears and heeds the voice it utters; who lifts himself not into a far, indefinite future, but into the future of to-morrow, not by the vague teachings of a remote past, but by the last word of the last day in which he lived, by the things said to himself in his own experience and consciousness, *not* by things said to others under other conditions and to other

ends. It was a very sublime truth uttered by the Psalmist, but he did not know half its meaning. With some old memory of his shepherd life (if David wrote it) or some fresh glimpsing of the skies whose twinkling hosts we so seldom think of, his thought turned toward the handiwork of God; and his language, simple, brief, grand, has gone to the uttermost parts of the earth,—a wondrous expression of that which no finite mind can ever fully gather in, or any finite spirit utter. No mere words so completely fill us with the awed sense of the Infinite as these: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth *his* handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge." Once standing under midnight skies and looking through the telescope, as the star I was gazing at passed out of the field of vision and left me looking into deep, dark, empty space, I for an instant caught a feeling akin to that which these words suggest. It is only at rare moments — moments like angels' visits — that we find ourselves lifted to any conception of the immense and infinite,— now and then upon a Mount of Vision, most of the time spent down among the things that hardly go out before prayer and patience and faith and toil.

I suppose that it was of God that the Psalmist first thought when he said, "Day unto day uttereth speech." In great nearness, he tried to hold himself to that Being from whom we keep so far. Had he really kept himself as near as his word would seem, great peace he must have had; for it is that that the sense of the divine nearness greatly gives in life's tumults and straits. But it was with him just as it is with us,

Here is the language of his better mood, his sense of inferiority and dependence, his sense of reverence and trust. His speech was better than his life, his emotion loftier than his conduct, what he knew better than what he did,— not because of anything hypocritical in him, as not in us, but because of that flagging service with which we follow up in life what really lies as corner-stone to our conviction,— yes, to our desire and attempt. Just that same surging, desperate battle which any of us of any moral vitality knows that he keeps up sometimes so despairingly between his better and his baser self, with ever-alternating victory, he waged, now calm with success, now desperate with defeat. I think we all love God better than we serve him, and it is just so always with our affections. The love outruns, underruns the needs, especially when the object of the love is above us and demands of us service. Day unto day uttereth speech unto us of God, from the moment that we wake. Like Old Mortality, it busies itself with sharpening the fading impressions of yesterday, or it gives new witness in its new event. Our daily waking, each day's girding for each day's combat, the renewal of affections, temptations, and labors,— the whole minutiæ of life's intercourse and machinery,— these, as well as Nature, with her sights and sounds, are daily utterances of God. They are witnesses to, interpreters of God. No matter what else we say or think,— last, first, always,— it is of God these speak. If you have any thought at all, you cannot dissociate them from him. In him, by him, because of him, we and they live, move, and have our being. Just now, day unto day utters speech in these rapid

changes which flash themselves before our eyes,— this fresh verdure, these spring blossoms, this glorious garniture Nature has flung so lavishly over hill, field, and wood, this rare beauty newly written in upon the face of the earth in grass and grain and flower, in songs of birds and lingering twilights, in deep thunders and gushing showers, in breezes that make breathing a luxury and living a delight. Day unto day is telling the story of the new hour, and God's infinity of love in it. The Lenten season of winter is over, and the Easter of Nature calls from their graves to the beauty of new lives the grains of seed, the germs of life that had seemed to die; and with each new outburst up from silent lips go hallelujahs that chime with all Nature's chorus, "*God is good.*" Go out into the country to this magnificent array of varied beauty in which God has lapped our city, out where the earth is telling the resource as the glory of our God,— go, blind sons and daughters of an Infinite Love, and see and hear and read and comprehend the story day uttereth unto day, away from noises and jars, works and ways and strifes and envies of man,— see what God is doing with busy love from morn till eve, in fields and lanes and woods that stretch themselves everywhere, that woo and coax with sight and sound, and where nothing stands between the soul and the divine creating hand. The great temple of Nature stands daily open, and, with enticings no art can have, waits to welcome and reward, to soothe and elevate, to tempt to the worship no mammon temple wakes. Beautiful for situation was Mount Zion, but round about Jerusalem the guardian mountains did not stand in such calm and varied

beauty as these hills about this city with the rich intervales between. Throw off the harness of your daily lives, get from beneath the hammer that beats the life from out your souls. Go to the smiles of our great Mother Earth, and up from them look for the smile of our great Father,— God,— and the dull thud of your sluggish pulse will bound with new life, the encrusting scales will drop from your eyes, and you will see, not flower and sky, not beauty and summer, but the great immanent spirit of them all,— Him in whom you, as they, live, move, and have your being.

Not in the country only, and at one season, does day unto day speak of God, but there are voices of the city, louder than its hum, that man may always hear, *must* sometimes heed. God is not only resident outside of city limits, an omnipotent gardener replenishing the earth, but just as much present and just as loudly speaking and just as clearly spoken of where the weary vessel chafes her sides against the dock, or the clatter of machinery or the concussions of trade make what men call life. Only you heed it! Daily life and daily detail proclaim Him by whose law and in whose sight all things revolve, whose infinite issues in blindness these work out. Strangely into the clash and selfishness of business and intercourse the day intrudes with its speech of God, its various lesson; and man finds himself compelled to learn of high things while grovelling amid the garbage of life. Sickness, misfortune, sin, poverty, gaunt in rags, with hollow voice and eye, waylay his step or besiege his business hour, demand for sympathy and charity breaks in upon the anxious fret, and calls him back to the humanity he

is tempted to forget, brightens and strengthens the great brother tie. Only let him heed what the busy press and busier telegraph bring him of the great harvest of events, adventure, discovery, progress,— only let the great, ever-growing record speak, not of facts alone, but the author of them, as they all *do*, just as much as lily or star,— and man would find that underneath the sordid cares of commerce, and overlying the intricacies of traffic, outspeaking from daily jar and jargon, is a divine name, influence, presence, as mighty to effect its purposes as the glowing life of sunset or of autumn. There is no hiding of God in cities, though men may hide from him. He walks the streets as the fields. The day is vocal of him everywhere. Day unto day uttereth its speech.

Day unto day uttereth speech of ourselves. We live by days. They are the leaves folded back each night in the great volume that we write. They are our autobiography. Each day takes us not newly, but as a tale continued. It finds us what yesterday left us. It works with us by yesterday's report. It has the drawbacks as the experiences of yesterday,— the good and the bad,— and with these sets itself at the new task of to-day. And, as we go on, every day is telling to every other day truths about us, showing the kind of being that is handed on to it, making of us something better or something worse, as we decide. It tells us if we have kept our temper, our resolves, our faith, if we have been selfish or self-denying: it tells the rule by which we walk, and how really we are growing into the lineaments of Christ.

The day's whisper to the next day, as it dismisses

us, is that it will find us very remiss in this command, in the following of which only are the harmony and success of life.

I remember that I used to think, as I suppose many still do half consciously, when everything had gone wrong with me, and the day's record was black with dissatisfaction, as it still so generally is, that, only could I get to sleep, that day's record would be closed and out of the way, and to-morrow I could begin with a clean sheet for a new trial. Sleep I used to think the same sort of sponge that some men conceive forgiveness to be,— the eradicator of the ineradicable facts of experience, and each day not the continuing of an old life, but the beginning again. So partially it is, new chances with new courage, while it is yet the outgo of the day gone, as the link in the ship's chain that slips your finger is the outcome of the link before. Many links, one chain.

It is a very weary heart as well as head that man lays away at night, and oblivion for the one as much as sleep for the other is his craving. His life-longing is to begin again, and yet again, to get away from these inexorable yesterdays, which cling to us in our struggles, and will not off. We cannot do it. Into the web of life they go, figure and color receding as the busy loom of time works in others,— get rolled on the great roll that with every diurnal revolution grows. Just as the swift runners amid the Highlands handed the same torch to the next, and it was borne on from hand to hand, from stage to stage, till its work was done, so day to day hands us on, each taking up the same life the other laid down, each with rapid stroke shaping

us a little, and with its added labor passing us on to the next, the new not effacing the old. However it may change color and figure of the future, however these may blend in future harmony or scatter wilder confusion, we do not lay aside life, only continue it.

Our one chance is improvement, not oblivion,— not that the past days shall forget or deny their record, but that the coming shall have better things to utter.

Not only of what has been does day unto day utter speech, but more sadly sometimes — might I not say always? — what might have been.

It is not the *com*mission that haunts memory so fiercely as the *o*mission,— omission that seems so trifling and venial as we yield to the moment's enticing, which looms so big itself and with such giant shadow to our backward looking. What I have done is bad enough; but what is unwritten that ought to be on life's record, what I had no business to leave out, what I have left *un*done it is that runs up a long and heavy column in the account. Day unto day uttereth speech of it,— little additions rolling on in ever-swelling volume, as the spring-tide comes rising, rising, till it submerges so much that is fair in life.

I need no other reminder than my memory; and, as I glance along the days, and sadly see that I "might have been" a man of so much juster proportions, so much fuller in all the faculty that makes manhood, with so much more even pace might have run my race, achieved so much more for man and for God, "might have been" so much more honest, persevering, industrious, bold, pure, true, unselfish, gentle, and obedient, so much better in every relation, manward, selfward, Godward!

The old days tell the new days this, and the new days find how toughened I am in the old depraved habits and thoughts. I mourn over what might have been: they cannot raise in me the courage yet to be that I wish I had been and shall yet more wish.

O friends, do not let us lapse into the drift that takes us away from hope as we near the goal, do not let us have these pitiful tales of day unto day as our only record, but let us rouse and nerve ourselves; and, whatever the sum of yesterdays, let us make the sum of to-morrows brighter, nobler, holier, the time past enough for mistake and folly, shame and sin, while future days shall utter unto future days a better tale and show a clearer course.

"Build to-day, then, strong and sure,
With a firm and ample base;
Thus ascending and secure
Shall to-morrow find its place.
For the structure that we raise,
Time is with material filled:
Our to-days and yesterdays
Are the blocks with which we build."

June 15, 1873.

IV.

EASTER.

"And I know not where they have laid him."—JOHN xx., 13.

ONE never quite satisfactorily arranges the sequences of the story of that resurrection morning. The separate gospel accounts are brief and unsatisfactory. When collated, there are gaps not to be closed, and contradictions not to be reconciled. The fragments of narrative, the separate interviews, the independent witnesses, can by no human ingenuity be woven into one complete, continuous account.

After the exciting scenes of the crucifixion, a few devoted friends — from among whom the disciples are conspicuously absent — get the body of Jesus, and lay it in the tomb, but are hurried from an incompleted service by the setting sun, which ushered in the Sabbath, on which nò manner of work could be done, especially as that Sabbath, by Mosaic ordinance, was a high day. The little party of men and women retire. We do not hear of the men again. The future story, so far as that first party is concerned, is confined to the women of it. And, of these women, she who most interests us, to whom Jesus seems to have shown special attention, who most tenaciously clung to him, is Mary Magdalene; and, if seven devils once went out of her, surely seven saints must have then possessed her.

She was at the burial, she saw the place where her master was laid; and that so sacred body had, no doubt, been composed to its last rest by her tender and loving touch. She drew back and went away, one bright thought only in her heart to support her slowly receding step, that she should once again see that so loved face, when early on the morning of the first day of the week she should come to finish her incompleted task. In the lone company of her heavy heart, wearily she waited at home till the Sabbath day was gone; and then as the prophetic dawn hinted of coming day, before the sun was up, "while it was yet dark," bearing sweet spices, she started on her sacred errand.

As she went, she thought of the great stone that had been rolled against the mouth of the cave. Who should roll it away? But it was rolled away already. The tomb was empty. Startled, she fled toward the city, and met the more tardily coming disciples. Her words are the first annunciation of that morning, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him." She turns back with them, and stands by the tomb, alone, silent, weeping, when a voice addresses her, "Why weepest thou?" And again it is, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." And then, as the angel leaves her, a form is before her which her dim eyes suppose to be that of the gardener, and to him she pours out anew the one agonizing thought, exquisite with the pathos and eloquence of despair: "Oh, sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." How dirge-like this repeated refrain, that solemn, sad, wail-

ing cry, wild and weird, "I know not where they have laid him."

They had not laid him anywhere,—disciple, gardener, angel. There had been nothing of that which the Pharisees pretended to fear. Of all men, the disciples the least capable of that act. They were too stupefied for that. There had been nothing of that which Mary may have vaguely suspected,—that his enemies had stolen him away. No enemy had done it. Nor had angels. Nor had man. When, how, no man knows; but

"The rock-barred door
Is opened wide, and the great prisoner gone."

The rites of sepulture never were concluded; and the swift word passed from lip to lip of friend, it reached the ear of foe, it spread the wide world round,—

"He is risen! he is risen!
Tell it with a joyful voice.
He has burst his three days' prison,
Let the whole wide earth rejoice!"

Jesus was not to pass to dust in the long, unrelieved silence and quiet of that hillside garden. It was death that died there; and Jesus lived.

Of all the days in the Christian's calendar, this should be the gladdest and the welcomest. A feast kept with sincerity and truth and one loud song of exuberant joy, echoing and re-echoing from pole to pole, and swelling in every soul, should usher in and greet

"This welcome morn
Which scatters blessings on its wings
To nations unborn."

Could we only in simplicity and sincerity adopt the morning salutation of the Greek Church,—"The Lord is risen,"—greeting friends and neighbors so, as on Christmas and New Year's morning we exchange our salutations, it would do much toward handing on freshly the gladness which should fill every heart at the return of this peculiar anniversary. But we may say it to ourselves, and be glad.

I have never been so impressed with the joyousness that ought to characterize this festival — that naturally would, if we really felt its meaning — as in reading many Easter hymns of late, and hearing the children rehearse their Easter carols. There is a certain sentiment that we talk about at times, and at times let lie half-dead, which characterizes a good deal our feeling about an anniversary which a real, deep, keen faith would vivify and pour out in spontaneous joy. For do we not celebrate the giving of the greatest love to man? Not the coming of Christ so blesses as does that going of his, which took with it the remnants of shadow and gloom, and filled the anxious heart of man with sweet, divine assurance. Say what you will about the witness, question and demur and declare the proof inadequate and the recorded fact a mistake, and bring science to deny the possibility of statements which have been the glad credence of the generations, somehow there is a fact that one cannot get behind,— that, dating from that time and day, an unprepared and reluctant people began to accept a marvelous truth, which became, in the enthusiastic hands of Paul, the mighty power with which old faiths were subverted and the one new established. For himself, his confidence in

the story of the resurrection, made him impatient of the clogs and conditions of the flesh, soothed his troubles and his wounds, and made light his dangers, and forced him on, dauntless, in a career which had not one earthly hope and every earthly loss. As Jesus was transfigured while speaking of the decease he was to accomplish at Jerusalem, so is Paul transfigured as he speaks of that accomplished decease and the bright morrow that broke through its horrors and flooded a world with its quenchless light. In the cross of Christ he glories, but it is the resurrection that makes his joy. No happier man in all history than he, as he pours out his ardent soul in joyful adoration, and tells of the blunted sting of death and the victor crown torn from the now uncrowned tyrant. And what a story is it to which the dim, dumb corridors under old Rome bear witness, that home of death vocal with hymn and hope and emblem, that up from dead centuries brings, through its dusty halls, the glad, triumphant convictions of those who laid their dead there! Since then, the host of high and low, old and young, great and small, wise and ignorant, who have gone; who have mourned, not as those who had no hope, but as those in whom hope was as open vision, and faith the great comforter! Well to ring in the Christmas tide, to greet its coming from steeple and from lip, with carol, gift, and gladness! Well that the whole heart should rejoice because to us is born a Saviour! And, surely, equally well, equally to be welcomed with glad acclaim, with happy voice and joyous song, the Easter day, which sheds its light over a world lying in darkness while Jesus walked with man, taking on brightness only when Jesus passed away.

How shall we keep this holy day of gladness,
This queen of days, that bitter, hopeless sadness
Forever drives away?
The night is past, its sleep and its forgetting:
Our risen sun, no more forever setting,
Pours everlasting day.

Let us not bring, upon this joyful morning,
Dead myrrh and spices for our Lord's adorning,
Nor any lifeless thing.
Our gifts shall be the fragrance and the splendor
Of living flowers, in breathing beauty tender,
The glory of our spring.

And with the myrrh, oh! put away the leaven
Of malice, hatred, injuries unforgiven,
And cold and lifeless form:
Still with the lilies deeds of mercy bringing,
And fervent prayers, and praises upward springing,
And hopes, pure, bright, and warm.

So shall this Easter shed a fragrant beauty
O'er many a day of dull and cheerless duty,
And light thy wintry way,
Till rest is won, and Patience, smiling faintly,
Upon thy breast shall lay her lilies saintly,
To hail heaven's Easter day.

The Mary question — which she, in the darkness of the morning and the darkness of her heart, put with such persistent perplexity — is a question that virtually many times comes to the thinking man, quite as much perplexed, quite as much in the dark as she. All about us, everywhere, words and professions, and calling upon Jesus, churches, societies, charities, hospitals, phrases a man must accept, dogmas he must believe, creeds he must subscribe to, forms, processes he must go through, a crowd, a host of things labelled Chris-

tian,—but the Christ, where have they laid him? Here is the civilized world, holding as the apple of its eye a venerated institution; and here are customs, laws, habits of people and of individuals, and they all bear a Christian name and purport to come of him, to be because of him. There are many valuable, admirable things about these, mingled with much that is no way desirable; but, even in their best expression, the marvel is that they should be considered Christian, that they should claim Christly origin and sanction, so little of the Christ is in them. Where have they laid the Christ? we say. A very successful, well-regulated Church, feasts, fasts, rites, ceremonies, occasions punctiliously looked after, a right administration of service, a broad allegiance of people, a wide-spread interest and power,—but the Christ, where have they laid the Christ? These might be attributes of, attendants upon, a well-regulated heathenism: they might be dicta of a philosophy, the expedients of a police, the morality of a well-ordered society, the sanction of honored custom,—any of a thousand motives might account for, uphold these. There is no Christ flavor to them. They bear his name; but where have they laid him? Where, in these, his unmistakable spirit? Jesus is not an embalmed body laid away in a Judean grave centuries ago, but Jesus is a living spirit, source and centre of a faith that lives; but where have these which have stolen his name, which do work as under his sanction and as by his help, laid that spirit which is to be the world's deliverance, without whose leavening presence all must go for nought? It is his own word that it is useless to cry, Lord, Lord! or to claim

to do mighty deeds in his name; and an apostle puts fresh emphasis upon it by declaring that no man, and no man's work, except it have his spirit, can be his. Where that is wanting, it is the madness of the maddest folly to claim to be his.

He is no patriot, how loud soever his profession, how plausible soever his seeming, in whom the very spirit which makes the patriot is evidently wanting: he is no republican, he is no democrat, he is no hard-money man, whose spirit lacks the very elements that go to make him one or the other. He is no Swedenborgian who ignores the influence, the spirit of Swedenborg; and why should that man be Christian, or that thing be Christian, which is conspicuous and notable for the absence of that which makes the Christian? The informing, inspiring spirit of a thing is that by which it is to be alone known. You may call something a rose to all eternity, but, if it have not that informing, inspiring something which makes a rose, an eternity of calling can't make it one; and you may call church, sect, man Christian up to the last "syllable of recorded time," but if church, sect, man, be not informed, inspired by that spirit which makes, which is, the Christ, the calling is vain. It comes back as empty as the echo that shouts at you behind the mountain,—nothing but a sound, the rebound only of air. We talk of nominal Christians. There can be no such thing. An echo is a nominal voice; but it is nothing, baseless, bodiless, substanceless, the shadow of a sound. To be nominally Christian is to be Christian not at all, is to be empty of Jesus as Mary found the tomb to be, is to mistake the tomb for Jesus, the dead place where

he had lain for the living force which already he was become. When Jesus had been taken away, it would have taken more than an angel to prove that he was there.

Only man attempts such legerdemain, and would have us believe that a cerement is a body, and the napkin and the linen clothes the living man, and the empty place quick with the throb and quiver of a beating heart. It is only man that takes a semblance for a reality, a shadow for a substance, who undertakes to lay away the spirit of Jesus, and yet pretends to have and hold it.

I have briefly to answer the Mary question by saying, We have laid him in the past. He is an embalmed memory rather than a living influence; he is a fact in history, not a present spirit; a man whom claiming to know is honor to ourselves, not proof of faithful service. We have laid him under catechism and creed, decrees, substitutions, and religious form and formula and custom,—buried him under these, not as one buries a corner-stone, that it may be the solid thing upon which the substantial edifice shall rise, but buried him as we bury things that we want to keep out of sight, and mean shall stay dead. We have been satisfied with the conjuring power of his name, and by its spell have attempted to work. We have let our idea of respectability, the customs of society, the proprieties of intercourse, the distinctions of class, and all the shifting and shallow expediencies overlay him, and established the sanctions of a reputable selfishness, tinctured with just a flavor of his name,—the low average of opinion of the low average of men,—into the place which is

alone of right his, till his influence is as dead in these as was his body when Pilate's myrmidons thrust the spear into his side. It is not undue exaggeration to say that, saturated with what is called a nominal Christianity, the things that pertain to life are empty of that spirit which is specifically his, and that to attempt to press the law of that spirit upon Christendom would be to shake it to its foundation. And that is a shaking Christendom needs, and must yet have.

For a moment look at what we call manhood. The cynic Diogenes lighted his lantern, and said he was searching for a man ; Plato, banished to Syracuse, told the tyrant that he had come to the island to find a virt uous man. Christ came not to search for, but to make. He came not in the majesty of a God, but in the beauty of personal holiness,— the model, the example of what the men of different philosophies were seeking, what the many wanted to find, to be. In all the way of life, he stands before us. Whatever we want to get at regarding it, he supplies us with. We have only to refer back to him, and the principles as the conduct of every-day existence become manifest. We no longer walk in the dark and stumble, but it is light all about us, and we are erect. Principles, precepts, injunctions, not mere matters of record, but in living witness, stand dressed in all their attractiveness and possibility, and how to grow into a Christianly manhood, a Christianly womanhood is just as clear in rudiment and in progress as how to grow into any ordinary calling or trade. And yet, in this great art of living,— the art of arts for all of us, the desirable and all-important consummation,— that very example, the

living spirit and influence of Jesus, has been laid aside; and we consent to be moulded by ten thousand other antagonistic influences, and to grow everyhow, after our own wills or the dictation of men and things about us. Satisfying ourselves in the virtue of a name, we go on to live much as if Christ had never lived, died, risen. So far as his example is concerned, he might as well be lying in a never opened tomb. With persistent ingenuity, we keep him from vision, we thrust him from thought. We go our own way. Clinging to his name, and in his name essaying to do many things, we grow away from that spirit whose stringent imperativeness is softened by the sweetness of his life and the grand results of resolute service. We make him really of no account, carefully laid away from sight and thought, and in history and in ourselves we have this unaccountable, this monstrous anomaly, a pattern by which nobody patterns, while everybody assumes to be by it patterned. How are we better than the whited sepulchres Jesus pointed out to his disciples?

What the Christian men and women have done with Christ all along these years of a Christian era is simply this,— they have laid him aside. They have not denied him: they have not forgotten him. They have confessed him, and then they have put him by, as one puts by the thing or thought that with a too faithful, troublesome pertinacity will keep itself before one, as the angel of the Lord would keep itself in the path of stubborn Balaam. Assuming to be walking after him, glowing with the desire to be named as his, in his name doing every manner of thing, and on it building every manner of hope, him men have simply waived aside;

and all his mighty self has been as a buried death in the Church's enterprise and the individual's career.

Empty, as the disciples found the tomb of Christ they expected to see, has the church life, individual life been of his life. The scattered cerements of the sacred body witnessed where the Christ had lain, witnessed to his death, and what more living witness have the Church and the soul? Forms, feasts, fasts, professions, cries of Lord, Lord,— cerements, swathing-bands, not the living soul. That is not in them. Our proverb is the play of Hamlet with Hamlet left out. The religion of the Church, the religion of the soul, is the religion of Christ with Christ left out. New churches building all the time, new sects rising all the time, new preachers, new views, new methods, great stir and interest and zeal, and every manner of thing laid hold of and brought in in his name, but not the Christ. Things not going right, the gospel not progressing, the world and the flesh and the devil successfully withstanding it,— an ever-growing, compact, and well-cemented kingdom arising to confront and threaten the kingdom of God, and men pressing into it, and the anointed custodians calling meetings and asking what to do, and devising new machinery, and gearing up and oiling old, themselves doubtful and quaking and distraught; but the Christ not called in, still laid aside, that living spirit not invoked, without which all machinery must be dumb and had better be dead.

And so this Easter morning finds the world. Nearly two thousand times have men kept the high festival of this memorial service,— flower and language and hymn and prayer and praise and ceremony joining in acclaim

to Him who was dead and is alive, yet not alive to the hearts, to the faith, to the needs, to the lives of the very men who shout and profess and commemorate. This is our to-day picture, our to-day fact,— immortal men not living as if immortal, but as if they were to eat and drink to-day and to-morrow die. We want to put away the corruptible law and life of the flesh, and put on the incorruptible law and life of the Spirit, to be clothed upon with the likeness of that One of all the sons of men whose life was a rising from the grave of trespasses and sins, whose spirit both points and leads to what can never decay. We need to grow into a diviner thing than the time shows, than the time aspires to, than the time believes in. We need to take the Christ from where he has been laid, and allow him to walk abroad in the atmosphere of daily life, once more appealing pungently and convincingly and building himself into the soul, its life. We do not need to keep Easter as a memorial; but we do need that living Easter power which shall raise us above our every infirmity, and make us quick with the elements of the holy life.

The point of it all seems to be not so much that Jesus has risen from the grave, and our hopes of a future are through that strengthened, as that because of him is the way out of the grave of trespass and sin. Immortality by itself is little. Merely to live again has nothing about it that one should desire it. The continuance of being has no value. The value, the desire, is in the new reach possible to the soul when it has risen above the things obnoxious to an infinite purity and love, obnoxious to a man's own best thought and

purpose. That which Jesus calls the eternal life is of more worth than any immortal life. It is the eternal life that gives the value to, that is the crown of the immortal life, that is more than cycles of ages, more than rest. And that thought should crown and consecrate the Easter, that the spirit touched to new life breaks the tomb of carnal desires, rends the cerements of selfish pursuit, puts off the dross of the earthly part, and walks out into new duties and higher hopes; and as the spirit of spring touches dead grass and buds, and makes new life course along their veins till all semblance of death is sloughed away, and Nature stands resplendent in the new vesture and glory of life, our souls, touched by the spirit of life in Jesus, put on their promise and their beauty, carnal things drop away, and the full flow of a diviner being, cleansing, purifying, elevating, throbs through these dull and laggard lives, supplying them with that quick power which shall transmute the man of earth into the man for heaven. Mary did not know where Jesus had been laid. She could not go to him. We do, and nothing stands between us and finding him except the stolidity of our wills.

We do not want to have it said of us that we have laid away our Saviour. Rather would we have it said that we are risen with him, that we have sunk our lower selves, repressed what is base, and are growing to be like him. We do not want that men should say of us or we confess it of ourselves that Jesus is but a name. No presence, no power. It is not the dead Christ of a past history that we desire to own, but the living Christ of a present influence. We want to feel

possessed by living power of faith in him, and then to feel it more, and after that still more. It was Mary's sadness that a body was gone: let it not be ours to miss that spirit which alone gives life, lifts man above what perishes, and crowns with honor and immortality. Easter songs, flowers, wishes, ceremonies, are nothing save as the spirit of Easter in our hearts, consecrating all that we are, do, and hope, enables us to leave behind as dead chrysalis all power of the inferior nature, while our ransomed souls wing themselves in new and broader flight, mounting as eagles mount, singing as larks sing, folding wing and hushing song only as we rest upon the topmost peak of high endeavor, and know ourselves to have found favor as God's sons.

How shall we better keep this holy day of gladness, this queen of days, than by renewing our fealty to the One too much overlaid, forgot, and under his banner re-enlisting for the great struggle of life? Life! Who knows its meaning, who comprehends its vastness, since Jesus has said there is no death? Who can make too much of this part of it? Who too well fit him for the other?

Easter Sunday, 1879.

V.

ONE THING I DO.

"This one thing I do."— PHILIPPIANS iii., 13.

PAUL was a man of definite purpose. In all history, probably, no man more thoroughly in earnest, so possessed by one great desire. He had one thing he would do. His whole make seems to have looked that way,— a man of an original, grand intention, of a condensed individual force, who would do whatever he had to do with a might, with an intensity that should insure its thorough doing. Any cause which had him for a champion was sure to succeed. He would do its work wholly and bravely and singly. No frittering of capacities, no scattering of energy, no wasting of opportunities, no halves about him; but what he is and what he does concentrate the entire man,— evidence of one and the same spirit in every phase of his checkered career. Into every one, he put his whole self. No one could complain. No one can write it against him that he did not thoroughly do the thing he started to do. Whether haling people to prison, or riding to Damascus, or fitting himself in Arabia, or following out the after career of industry, courage, and faith, one indomitable purpose impels him. Into his tent-making, his persecutions, his apostleship, he carried

one and the same spirit. Each in its own season was that one thing he would do, the one thing he did.

We talk a good deal about success, but a good deal the secret of it is consecration to one work, and concentration upon it. That is very much truer than the seductive mixture of nonsense and falsehood with which so many tickle themselves and deceive others.

Success is an achievement and has conditions; and chief of them are these, which not the most fortunate or the most largely endowed may overlook. Conditions are never very fascinating, nor will anything short of the bitterest experience convince some men of their necessity. Industry that shall never tire, not want purpose, will alone redeem even genius from mortifying failure. Genius, with all its brilliant, but uncertain, desultory, and, on the whole, valueless efforts, has not made the world much its debtor. Its obligations, rather, are to single-purposed, industrious, fixed mediocrity. Opportunities, surroundings, social position, and influence, the thousand outside accidents or natural advantages to which men attribute success, have really very little to do with success; while they more generally hinder than help the individual, spoil rather than make him. I don't like that word "success," when used as the aim of life or the criterion of it. A man is to let all thought of success go, to sweep from his imagination the glamours with which it fascinates, to put himself at the work of life in the spirit of fidelity, to do the best that he can do because it is right, and then dismiss every thought of consequence, refuse to gauge himself or allow himself to be gauged by success. I do not suppose Paul ever thought of it.

Jesus never did, and no true man should. Let it come, if it will; and, if it won't, why then pray for heart and pluck to bear it, and try again, always sure that honors and wealth and the thousand things men prize may not come, but consecration to and concentration upon any one honorable work must give a career eternity will never be ashamed of, and enough worldly return to keep from the clutches of poverty. There is every manner of misfortunes attending our mortal condition, but nothing has yet occurred in human experience to shake man's bottom-most convictions that fixed and resolute energies insure what is best in any success.

When we start in life, we do not think enough about this fixing upon one thing and sticking to it. Young people have not a great deal of that quality. It is something they have got to learn.

Our first striking into life is a good deal like our first striking out in the water,—a very large quantity of surplus energy very illy directed, spatter and splutter very discouraging, to very little purpose. We are all abroad, flustered, concentrated not at all, because we have not learned the habit as the necessity of fixedness, of picking out from the great mass the one particular thing upon which we will lay out ourselves. And somehow our education, both at home and at school, does not help us a bit. They alike tend to fritter. What do you for a child's mind, when you compel it to wrestle with a half-dozen different branches of study in a single school session, get it a good start at history and then call for geometry, and, when well in the intricacies of angles and sines and what not, call for French? What do you for the trade-apprentice, when you are

always taking him away from the thing he is just at, when he has to drop file and take hammer, or turns from adze to sand-paper, this moment is on some nice and delicate job, and the next at rough work that taxes all his muscle and unsteadies his mind for what he was just at? We talk about the narrowing tendencies of the divisions and subdivisions of labor; and when a man can only make the heel of a shoe, but can't put on the sole, life does seem whittled down to a pretty distressing minimum. And yet the mastery of a single thing, however minute, is of very much more importance than the mastery of nothing,—the mastery inevitably his who fixes himself to no definite purpose,—and only by such concentration on one thing can we get perfection. With every drawback, the only way is to do one thing. The men who have accomplished the real things of life are not the brilliant, erratic men who have turned their hands to everything, but the plodding men who have stuck to one thing. With all the ridicule we have played off on them, the men of one idea have been the men to heave the world ahead; and so the men of one work. It is one idea, one work, one thing clung to, as a man clings to the plank that holds him from death, that has filled the world with accomplishment; and men prove that they begin to understand it by this matter of specialties in every vocation, which is one of the significant things of this generation. I suppose Columbus was a man of one idea, a bore, a fanatic whom people hated to see coming, because he would be sure to talk about the great unknown continent; and yet it was his persistence in the thing which he made the one idea of his life that opened up a new world and made

your life and mine possible. We know what a pestiferous set of fellows those were, a few years ago, for whom we had hard words and mobs, who, in season and out of season, in every style of language and of garb, by day and by night, and everywhere, preached the gospel of anti-slavery, and yet, on very diffuse, general conviction that slavery was wrong, never would have forced the issue. It is the purpose to do one thing, and the doing it, that achieves result. The engineer of the passenger train does not tend the fire, and stand at the brake, and collect the tickets, and manage the express, and handle the freight, and chat with the passengers, and play cards in the smoking-car, an ubiquitous and generally ornamental or overburdened official; but he is in the cab, his eye on the track, his hand where it can touch lever or throttle, his whole self alert, a man of an incarnate consciousness, no off-thought or power. He is doing one thing; and because he does it, your safety and the journey's success. And think how it has been in science, in invention, in all manner of discovery, in scholarship, state, art, mechanics, philanthropy. It is the one thing at a time, the one thing well held to till accomplished, each separate stone well placed and thoroughly built in, that builds up causes, truths, men. Put everything that you are into a bewildered series of vague and ill-assorted effort, and you do nothing real, valuable, lasting. It is like the old fowling-piece that was a master-hand at scattering small shot all through a flock, ruffling feathers and breaking legs and wings, but really bringing down nothing. Put all you are into one thing: stick to that. It is like the rifle at Creedmoor or at Wimbledon. It takes out the very central eye, and bears away the prize.

And so, whatever of belittlement may come of the doing one thing, we must run the risk for sake of the good that can in no other way be reached, and learn to counteract it by that counteracting a well-instructed conscience insures. We may write it as a first condition to useful, honorable life anywhere, without which is no accomplishment, that the power of the whole man must be laid out on the selected thing. One thing must be resolved on, and that one thing done. The old patriarch, dying away back there in the centuries, said it of his son, "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel"; and history and biography and experience have been ever since repeating the fact. You and I know many a failure in manhood, solely for lack of concentrated purpose; while we have seen many a one, pigmy otherwise, grow by it into a son of Anak.

And when we see what a fixed devotedness to one thing does, consecration and concentration, one wonders that one ever hesitates at anything. The most obdurate has to succumb, the most hopeless yields. There is no obstacle. To-day's necessities are the impossibilities of the last generation, every one of them the result of somebody's fixed adhesion to one thing, till it was done. So tunnels pierce the roots of mountains, and telegraphic wires lie undisturbed in ocean deeps, far spaces in the firmament above are read, and fickle weather induced to make known its secret. One feels it to be the sesame before which all things shall unlock themselves. Somebody says, "That man is terrible who does one thing." I remember just after the battle of Winchester that General Sheridan said this to me, "When I go, I want to go all over." He put

everything that was in him into the thing he was about. It was life or death, hit or miss, neck or nothing, and all that not in the reckless, uncalculating way we have been apt to think,— something definite, no half-way ; and so he was terrible,— terrible because every obstacle that put itself in his way had got to get out of it, cost what it might. It was the soldier spirit we want a little more of in life. I love to think of men who are up to something the like, not the hair-brain, dare-devil men dashing against the mills of the gods, but the hardy and daring and resolute men not to sway or yield, who conquer in all fields, and not only write their own name in glory letters, but leave the horizon all threaded with gold when they are sunk beneath it. When a man says, "That thing has to be done, and I am going to do it," whether it be a battery to be taken, or a habit to be conquered, or any little home stent, or daily trivial duty; when you read, by word, by deed, by look, that the great resolve possesses him, as a divine spirit might have possessed the Pythoness,— possibly you may feel that the word "terrible" hardly defines it; but just let him strike difficulty, meet resistance, find himself sore pressed, and then you feel not the sublimity of purpose merely, but the terrible power that lies in him, resolved to do the one thing.

And there is something in one fixed, definite purpose that unfolds a man to himself, and gives him confidence, courage, and growth. A man does not begin to grow till he has purpose. He does not understand what is in him nor suspect what he can be. Alas, how many live out all their days without understanding what is in them, and go away with no suspicion of the

kind of men they might have grown up to under the inspiration of a single resolute purpose! It is amazing the sluggish, contented embryo that one can contrive to be before he has thoroughly roused himself, and what confidence and courage he comes to, who has set himself his task and measured himself against it. That is a new day, the dawn of a new life to the boy, when he has taken himself out of the routine of the child, and resolved to be something in lesson or play or conduct; and the thrill with which the young man put his hand on his earnest life-work tingles yet along the very nerves of age. It makes us almost giant to feel the birth-throe of a living purpose. The lioness, reproached because she gave but one at a birth, replied, "Yes; but that a lion." And the one lion purpose born to a man, to grow into the one thing of life, is a birth to be proud of and never forgotten. After it, we are never the same. It has lifted out of old conditions, limitations: it has put a spirit in us as the new inspiration toward a broader life, the quick play of whose pulses, vibrating through the whole man, impels us to thought and deed. You may have noticed in your boy how he seems to have sprung in a night into a great manhood. He laid himself down a child, he arose a man,— the boy behind, and he a new creature in all the grand, fixed purpose and resolve of life. You may remember the leap you made yourself, shut out of and beyond self, when you had come up to the great crisis and turning of life and were resolved what to be, and had set your first foot out in the new journey, and had turned the new leaf in life. In that act, you stood self-revealed, were more of a man than you knew for, had

more of the stuff and substance in you; and life, which turned from you as playmate, you welcomed in his new garb of yoke-fellow. It is a proud, a solemn, a sublime moment that sees the soul register its purpose and write it as with imperishable letters, "This one thing I do, come weal, come woe, come ban of man or shock of time, come sorrow and distress and loss,— though I stand alone, *here* I stand, this I do"; and the life of slow, earnest, arduous toil that follows partakes of the grandeur of the birth. A dull and depressing toil, too, sometimes; and often has life to be taken at a dead pull, at every disadvantage, steam shut off, brakes down, and all around yawning despairs. The more the need for just that purpose, which comes to us phrased in the fiery words of Luther, but which was keyed to a loftier note by the Buddhist missionary who said, "Even if the gods were united with men, they should not frighten me away." That is what we want, — the purpose to do from which nor devil nor gods shall drive, before which the very despairs shall be dumb and impossibilities compliant. It was in the midst of such that Paul cheered and braced himself by saying, "This one thing I do." It was the device upon his banner, his cheery, *always* cry, the word ever re-echoing its response from the far and beckoning heights, leading and sustaining till he laid all down. The "Excelsior" of the poet is but the Paul of the flesh.

The tendency and temptation to fritter, and the amount of it discernible in the lives about us, the lack of concentration, is one of the most alarming features of our American civilization. We have been educating

ourselves away from the virtues of our ancestry, and it begins to tell. Necessity, perhaps, *com*pelled them to fixedness of habit and purpose quite as much as any principles of faith or conduct *im*pelled them; but, undeniably, they were a people of truer calibre and greater specific character than we threaten to become, for as yet the disasters to American character are threatenings, foreshadows, rather than any actual, positive, permanent deterioration. The decay of useful habit and occupation among our young women, the immense amount of aimless nothing they manage to infuse into their lives, the absence of exact and thorough and resolute and useful occupation; the minutes gone here, the hours there, upon an industry that means little and amounts to less; the superabundance of waste upon the purely ornamental and ephemeral, the lack of sober setting one's self down to what honestly may be called work so as to become proficient in the homely graces,—in short, the absolute fritter of life, to which the average American young woman submits herself, is only equalled in disaster by the folly of her brother, who is everything by turns and nothing long, who is here to-day and there to-morrow, this one week, that the next, so that, unconsciously, our salutation has got to be, "Well, what are you doing now?" As such times as these specially betray, the market-place is full of those who have half-learned trades, or of those who are just tide-waiters, ready for the thing that turns up, and not fitted to do that well. You find that most men who come to you for aid are the men who never had a definite occupation, have never fixed themselves to anything, have nothing of

which they can say, "This one thing I do." It is amazing, the catalogue of things a man will tell you he has turned his hand to; while it is all but impossible to find a man who can do any one thing well,— and very much, I think, because of the idolatry which the average Yankee has so long had for the god Smart. Young men think themselves smart, and trust to that: they have no consecration or concentration; and it is a threatening cloud of doom that rises up before the future,— and he is no croaker who says it,— unless our young people shall be compelled to see that, not interest, but necessity as well as principle, demand a quick and radical change. We can't go so another generation. We must get the old fire of purpose, the old fixedness, into life. We must inspire young lives with the true elements of manhood and womanhood. We, as they, must come to see what life means, what life wants of us, and put ourselves at that with all the power we are masters of, and do that thing as if it were the only thing to be done and we alone could do it,— consecrate ourselves to, concentrate ourselves upon it. That is the only assurance that you can have that the things of life will be done. One of the best lessons I ever learned was from a laborer with the city teams, whom I watched for years. I have seldom seen the spirit of the one thing more fully embodied. He seemed to feel as if the world were made for him to dig a ditch in or make a street through, so incarnate was he of purpose about the thing in hand, so resolute in industry; and every nerve he had, the whole volume of his muscle and sinew, were given to his mission. It was really sublime,— the tireless energy with which

he put himself into the thing he did. It is again true, and always true, and everywhere and every time true, what the quaint old worthy said:—

> "Who sweeps a room as for thy laws
> Makes that and th' action fine."

But let us not forget that the one thing Paul said he would do was to press forward to the possession of that spirit that was in his Master, from which he said principalities, powers, things present, things to come, height, depth, life nor death, nor any other creature, had power to separate him. He had one over-all thing he wanted to do, and he had one motive for doing it. What in religion men want is both,—the one thing to do and one great, prominent motive. A thousand little ones never will make one great one. Possibly, it may do to enter upon any other pursuit from a variety of motives; but as one great power upholds the world and sends it spinning through the spaces, while at the moment of need a myriad little ones might leave us the prey of their insignificance, so, to have a grand Christian life, we must have not only one example, but one motive for accepting and following it, and in the strength of its simplicity and sufficiency move to the great one work. Paul has supplied us with the motive to become Christ-like, as Christ has with the example. That fixed, it is for us to be the one thing. The intermittent, fluctuating attention we give it, the divided affections which it has, are not the means to a successful issue. There are venerable sins in us will not fall before anything less than a determined and persistent siege. Not an hour's diversion from our pur-

pose but is felt, but weakens our capacity and prolongs our strife. We have not the hours to spare. A work, the issues of which no man can overvalue, waits for our whole energy. Our soul-sparks struck from the divine essence need kindling into a pure, steady, and intense flame. They can only be fitted to inherit the kingdom by that genuine, entire devotion which shall lift them above the wiles of other employments, and leave them at liberty to love and labor for the One.

SWAMPSCOTT, July, 1875.

VI.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

"The kingdom of God." — LUKE xvi., 16.

THE phrases "kingdom of God" and "kingdom of heaven" are old Hebrew phrases, and used interchangeably. They mean one and the same thing; that is, the rule, dominion, supremacy, of what is true, right, God-like, heavenly, not a place, but a condition. Paul says, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, joy, and peace, in the Holy Spirit." Jesus says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness," and afterward declares that kingdom to be within.

What I have to say of the kingdom of God, just now, lies in a little different direction. And I would like to gather within its realm things not enough seen to be of it, nay, supposed to be contrary and alien to it. Jesus says, "The kingdom of God is within." I want to say that it embraces all things. It runs back to that time which science includes within unknown thousands of years, which Scripture comprehends in the one word "chaos," to that "beginning" of which no man knows; and it runs forward to the end of time and things, of which extreme, as of the first, again no man knows. It embraces and it holds within itself all that was and is and is to be. Men have not yet come

fully to understand this. They have a good many kingdoms besides God's; and they put him over a very restricted province. Scarcely was Christianity recognized before it dwindled into a strange incongruity and complication, betraying no more elevated conception of the Deity than the mythologies do, the whole matter being cut up and divided very much as Homer had it, among the Olympian gods.

Very little was left to the Supreme beyond a vague, far-away, impersonal oversight. That phase was succeeded by a condition of things no better. God was just as much wronged, obscured, his kingdom invaded, taken away from him, when Christianity, following Persian leading, gave most of it to the devil. If you believe what is a great deal said to-day, you will have to believe that this evil spirit still rules over a large part of the kingdom of God, that our God is but a very helpless God. Then, theology, jealous of the divine right, believing only in a revealed word, to all intent and purpose excludes him from nature, so that between materialists, who deny him anywhere, and religionists, who would have his kingdom to be the exclusive one of their faith, the great *All-in-All Spirit* is a virtual recluse, the larger part of material and human affairs are within their own separate kingdoms, under other cognizance and control than his. A very fundamental need is the need of some conception of the extent of the divine kingdom. When David wrote it so grandly,— "Whither shall I go from thy spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the

morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness will cover me, even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee," — he wrote it better than he knew. Such language seems very wonderful, as do many like outbursts, in which the glories of the heavens and the movements of the winds and the grandeur of the storms and the awe of silence and of night speak not of themselves, but of Him to whose kingdom they belong, of whose power and majesty they are the witness and expression. It was such an advance upon the best heathen belief, that had put all these things of the outward world under separate and subordinate deities: it is such an advance upon the belief of most of us, of this busy crowd who profess and call ourselves Christians, to whom these things are as ever-present as to the old-time singer, while they do not sing to us the same constant and glad melody. He drew them all within the kingdom, made them subject to the handling of God: we are but too ready to rule God out; and to-day the struggle and wrangle, a good deal, is as between a material kingdom and a divine. Men talk about certain material changes in the brain, and draw diagrams to show how separate molecules assume different relations to one another in response to, or rather as creative of, certain sentiments, thoughts, resolves, and point to these things, changes, as within the realm of order of a physical kingdom. I cannot help feeling however wonderful and true that thought, how much truer,

more wonderful, an older thought, that would keep these within God's kingdom. This effort to leave God out of the things that are his, whether it be made by man's indifference or man's familiarity with phenomena, or with what he calls nature's laws, not only shuts us off from many grand and tender thoughts, from much delicate and helpful sentiment, but really shears of their grandest proportions, as of their most wholesome truth, many things capable of carrying us on to the Eternal, materially and inevitably.

It is well enough to know what science has to say about the structure and material of our frames, to take it home to our thoughts that we, so compact in flesh and blood and bone, are really but a "few pounds of solid matter distributed through six pailfuls of water"; but to stop there, to remand us to the physical kingdom, to keep us out of God's kingdom, were no service to us. We had better be ignorant about the components and properties of our bodies, so we can keep the thought of them as within God's dominion and care. It is vastly interesting to follow the astronomer, the microscopist, the evolutionist, through their marvellous unravellings; but if you establish them within a realm of their own, if they contain their own causes, if the behind, primal creative impulse is of and in themselves, you rob God's kingdom of his grand omnipotence, you make puny principality his dominion, shut in, shut out by the surrounding peaks which divide it, in cold abruptness, from the kingdom of a godless evolution.

A good man said one day, when I was pleading for morality in business, and that no one had a right to

allow the expediency of market or the temptations of individual gain to override the grand fundamentals of honesty and truth, "God has nothing to do with the grocer's business," slicing off one great province of his kingdom by a word, taking all the active hours of his life, his plans and hopes, straight out of the keeping of the Almighty, shutting himself within a little kingdom of his own.

We cannot do this arbitrary thing. We cannot, at whatever line we will, bow the Great One out. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. All places, powers, times, seasons, eternities, are within his dominion: it cannot be brought to desolation by any such division; and though we rend away, here and there, portions of it, and only leave him, like some Jupiter upon an Olympus, a far-off king amid a host of lesser and rival deities, it is, in the end, we that are rent. His kingdom stands, world without end, indivisible and one.

When Jesus so emphatically told his disciples that the kingdom of God was within, he did not mean to deny that it is without also. With just as much intenseness and fervor was he careful to show that the kingdom of God was without, and has tied forever the flowers blushing at his feet, the sparrows circling above his head, the clouds along the western sky, the hairs of one's head, the cubits of one's stature, to the thought of a divine providence, revealing it, through them to us, as itself was revealed by them to him.

Though I cannot quote it to you by chapter and verse, "The kingdom of God is without you," yet it is there, and, in its time and place, as unqualifiedly em-

phatic as the other. The great nature volume bears witness of his authorship as clearly as the tablets of stone which we are told were written by his fingers. The things writ upon her pages, writ in flower, in star, in minute and marvellous mechanism, in chemical change, in advances and retrogrades, in growths and deaths, in blossoms and decays, in solar systems and infinitesimal existences, have behind them his guiding, his law, his will; drop from his fingers, as the type from the hand of the setter; are the transcript of his thought, the fresh, visible record of what centuries long gone he did, of what to-day he does, and read out, in clear, indubitable phrase, his honor and glory.

The kingdom of nature is his kingdom, informed freshly and, as I love to think despite all the chain of intermediate causes which I do not disallow, immediately by him. I know men frown upon it, and they array their fact against it; but I love to think that David was literally right, and that the moon and the stars, and, if these, all things, are made by the very finger of God. I love to feel that his voice calls out the spring, and that the hurrying breezes and the sweeping storms, the movements of tides and harvests of earth, and all things that live and grow, wherever they have their being, bear not only the image and superscription of the One, but are his handiwork. I would put God close against his work, as I would the mechanic close against his tool, his creating thought and will against his created thing, so that I might feel it to be his and take great gladness at the feeling; and I would have the gladness grow to reverence, and reverence to love, and love to faith, and this fair universe

become in every part, in very deed, the kingdom and glory of God.

There are, besides, other provinces in the divine kingdom than this vast and varied one of nature. God's kingdom is kingdom within kingdom. The kingdom of thought is his: men use it as if it were theirs. They abuse it in many ways, and feel no account owing him for abuse. But mind is God's as well as matter; and all that a man makes or gets out of his mind belongs to God, as much as that he makes or gets out of his soul. I think it is the great thing not to let our thought at any time prove traitor, and work toward the setting-up of any other empire, the sapping of that one. In all the freedom and revel of it, in all its allowed liberty and wonderful range, in its lighter, in its graver moments, in its depressions, in its aspirations, have a care that it do not escape, that it do not rebel at the barriers beyond which lies an outer kingdom of darkness, where are wailing and weeping and gnashing of teeth. I have no right to hand my thought over to the custody of any thing that makes against the interests of God's kingdom. Not that I need be thinking of them all the time, chained like a galley slave, or doomed in penance like a nun to one spot, one method, one work. God is served, his ends advanced, his kingdom secured by the indirection of pure and honorable living as by the special acts and services of meditation and of prayer and worship.

Only it must be pure and honorable living, the unstudied and unconscious outgo of pure and honorable thought, the living water of an untainted source. Whether it be the thought that is born and dies un-

voiced, passing as a dream, or brooded over as the heart of life; whether the thought that shapes itself in art, in painting, in sculpture, in building, or that goes out seeking other thought through literature of whatever branch; whether thought backward — memory — or thought forward — hope or fear,— it all belongs to, should all be kept within, all subsidiary to the one kingdom and rule, drawing men out of the silent and secret seclusion of their own less and more trifling things, drawing them on to greater strength, to broader reaches, helping them to soar with upward gaze, as the eagle soars and gazes, till they can rest within the bosom of the Infinite.

It fairly oppresses one to remember that all the wonderful things men have said, and have handed through the ages down to us, have been the outgo of feeble and timid aspiration, and the bringing back from the beyond Source, great riches and treasures out of an infinite wisdom and knowledge, impressing it upon us that the limitless range within which the human intellect has liberty is God's kingdom, as well as is the limitless expanse within which light and gravitation and the blue ether harmonize and dwell.

The same faith that feels that the man can take no wings and flee no whither but God is there, that the man cannot get outside of God's kingdom, attests the inability of thought to escape the bands and limits assigned it, and that all these ample returns that troop about and surprise and gladden, instruct and elevate, are but echoes of the great Spirit dwelling within us all, to whom all things that are are subject.

The same may one say of truth. Truth may not be

tampered with, because, how broad soever of itself and how valuable, over all it is of God's kingdom, and you may not annul or tarnish it. In its lesser grades, as truth between man and man; in its broader sphere, as truth of science, literature, religion, it is subordinate to the great, over-all Being, its founder and father, within his realm and jurisdiction. Wherever truth is, there is God; and, wherever truth is, it leads to God. There is no danger in following truth wherever it leads, whatever it overthrows or destroys. It ever keeps within the lines appointed of God: it will never cross the appointed limit. It needs no warning of revenue law or custom-house or excise man or soldiery. It deals in nothing contraband, it seeks nothing of its own. It is alive with another spirit. It knows itself to be handmaiden of that which is as much beyond itself as the unborrowed light of the central sun of suns is beyond the light that glitters from the surface of a broken bit of glass flung on the ocean beach. Truth is grand in itself, whether from a child's lips or from those clothed with the power of intellect, experience, or character; but truth has only its own grandeur when we conceive of it and all its wealth of worth as but one of the innumerable provinces which go to make up the kingdom of our God.

Take one more material thing, and say the same of mechanism, in whose marvellous resources and abilities man has in these just past years been inclined to see but the reflex of his own might and the extension of his own kingdom. Nothing strikes us as more utterly gross, unethereal, unspiritual, than the machinery — oily, noisy, and grimy — which in complicated

variety makes and controls the comfort and the wealth of our generation, and contains within itself "the promise and the potency" of things in the future, the very possibility of which dizzies the soberest brain. We are only at the beginning of the triumphs of the mechanical section of the great kingdom; and many a one, unsettled by what has been achieved, conceives of mechanism as standing with its hand at the throttle of the universe ready to defy Omnipotence, bold to make the attempt to run the great machine itself. We have those who, in thought at least, would dare the old attempt of Phaeton with the chariot of the sun; men who do not see God at the centre of the machine, but man; and the more the machine does, the more they see man,—like Herod before the people,—pleased with the flattery and considering themselves as gods. I more dislike and doubt this materialism, the materialism of practical men, than the more pronounced materialism of the schools.

One day at the Centennial Exhibition, at the hush of noon, I stood, one in the great crowd awaiting the starting again of the great engine. By and by, as the hour struck, it seemed to stretch and yawn and draw a long breath, like a man rousing from slumber, then slowly and with half-force to begin its work, and then at last, thoroughly roused, the ponderous beam rose and fell, the piston sunk and lifted itself again. Near and away off, I heard the whirl and whirr of wheels and saw the swift gliding of belts, and I knew that all over the many buildings life and labor responded to the dumb throbs of this lately so inert mass before me. Men and women looked at each other. "Great is Cor-

liss," they exclaimed; but an inaudible voice spoke, "Great is God." His spirit was within the wheels, his breath informed with life the interlacing bands. At his word, swift shuttles flew, accurate cogs interlocked; and, to the systole and diastole of the great iron heart, whole miles of machinery responded with a nimble accuracy that outran that of human fingers. These great vessels, crowding through storm and night; these huge locomotives, following the iron rails through zones and continents, over mountains and along valleys, doing the traffic and bearing the burdens of harvests and commerce; and these watches with delicate accuracy telling the time beats of the sun and systems; photograph, telegraph, telephone,—they, and whatever else the genius of mechanism shall devise, send up their consenting voice to the oneness and the glory of the kingdom of God, of which they with their marvel and their magnitude are but a small part.

So one might go on and tell how broad the domain of that kingdom of which we, too, are. I do not know what it is, but to me the satisfaction is immense. I feel the glow and quiver of it, that I can believe that everywhere all things are of God. From everywhere to everywhere, I can go nowhere, can find nothing that is out of his kingdom. The great revivalist talks a great deal of men who are "out of Christ." To me, it is a grand thing to feel that nothing can be out of God, that all are parts of one glory and one kingdom; that there are no divisions and un-harmonies, but all things bound in one, to one end, for one good. It is not that at the uttermost bound of earth I still find him, but that at the uttermost reach of space, of time, eternity,

of truth, of power, of thought, hope, and love, I find him myself, in all directions, under all guises, a citizen of his kingdom, by no possibility of escaping. If you want to get an idea of God, of the vast and the infinite power he is, do not go to the heated pleadings of men or to the cooler logic of theological statement, but go to your own spirit, with the door shut, and then from its silence step into the world, or follow out some thought, or trace some truth, or into the busy wheels and mechanism of life put inspiring God.

It will move, it will awe, it will satisfy you; and then when your Bible comes to tell you about your heavenly Father, and you follow all the wise words of good and holy men, and add to the kingdom within the kingdom without, you will have clearer thought of the infinite marvel of your own being, and all the interacting harmonies among which you dwell, and life will grow to one long interpreting of the one Spirit that animates all things, and seeks through all to lift the human soul out of its solitude and littleness into that wondrous sympathy and companionship which binds each to all and all to God.

February, 1877.

VII.

GENTLE INFLUENCES.

"And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp and played with his hand, so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him."—I. SAMUEL xvi., 23.

SAUL had proved himself unworthy of the trust reposed in him, and had fallen under the divine displeasure. It was told him by the prophet that the sceptre should pass out of his family. He became jealous, irritable, and occasionally fell into fits of the most profound melancholy, during which it was dangerous for any one to oppose or offend him. As this tendency increased upon him, his friends felt the necessity of taking some steps toward its removal, and, remembering that he had always been sensible to the influence of music, they proposed that some able musician should be obtained, whose duty it should be to play to the king, whenever these fits came on. This meets with the king's approval; and one of the courtiers, recalling the skill and sweetness with which he had heard the young son of Jesse play upon the harp, mentions his name to the king, at the same time making such allusion to his personal qualities and prowess as induces Saul to send to his father and demand the attendance of the young David.

So the future king, a bright-eyed boy of fifteen sum-

mers, found himself first within the precincts of that royal abode which, in the end, was to be his own home; while Saul, ignorant of the fact that he was so preparing the way for his successor, received him gladly, and, won upon by his beauty, his manners, his bravery, promoted him to the honorable place of armor-bearer. His presence was a comfort to him. "And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp and played with his hand, so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him."

What power was that thus gained! David but passed his hand over the strings of his harp, and the maniac soul was calm and submissive as a child. He whom all feared, who had hurled his ready javelin at his only son even, became a man again under the soothing of music; at first thought, a thing as little likely to produce such result as any that could be named,—a thing of mere airy sounds, which would seem to beat against the nerves of a crazed brain as fruitlessly as the waves against the rock. And yet, though only sound, sound low, sweet, harmonious, impressing only the wave of air that passed it, dying as soon as born, it calmed the rage of the monarch, lulled his jealousy, and brought him to himself again. Though only this frail, delicate thing, it has done what nothing else could do,—tamed the beast, the savage, and the madman, and wrought mighty changes in character and life. What is mightier than music? It expresses what language and painting and sculpture and architecture fail to express. The simple melody, the solemn chant, the elaborate opera or oratorio, the

human voice, the wonderful combination that utters itself in a well-appointed orchestra or peals from an organ or a chime of bells, each and all attest a power of expression in music, unapproachable by any other which is given man.

The songs of a nation are said to be stronger than its laws. At the sound of a national anthem, the patriot's heart beats, he grows brave, and is ready to do or die.

Music lifts the deadened soul up to worship, makes a deeper gladness in the joyful, soothes sorrow when all things beside fail, reawakens hope, gives courage and endurance. The invisible harmonies thrill through the whole being, permeate our animal and our spiritual nature, and touch a depth far beyond what has before been touched. The coward running for his life catches the note of some "God save the King," he halts, and turns, and is a man again. The glazing eye of faith grows bright again, as the familiar hymn for the last time reaches the ear. All emotions express themselves in song,— the gladness of joy, the humility of contrition, the bitterness of sorrow, the fervor of gratitude, the rapture of love. When the world was completed and God rested from his first great labor, the morning stars sang together. Music was the first acclaim of gratitude and joy that broke the silence of creation. When Christ was born, no word was uttered, no voice spoke, no thunder muttered, no lightning flashed, but music broke the stillness of the Judean night, and an angel chant wafted the benison of heaven to the worn and weary waiting ones of earth. And so, as earth passes, it sometimes seems as if the ear, that grew dull to

earthly sounds, caught other nobler strains, as if that which is the highest reach of expression here were the common language of heaven.

It would seem a foolish statement to make, if it were not everywhere a recognized fact that great power is not with men and things which have the name of it. Some obscure man will write a song: it shall pass from lip to lip, from heart to heart, till it becomes the chant of liberty to a million souls, and tyrants and thrones and powers shall melt before it. You marvel at the ponderous machinery which drives the thousand rattling looms of the factory or propels the vessel in the teeth of the gale across the ocean, and you use it as an emblem of power; and yet the power is in that almost invisible vapor which in repose sails lazily up from every evening cup of tea, and in its might conquers the power of the seas, and in its passion wrecks the mightiest fabric of man. We still retain the idea that power resides in the rude, rough forces which we see about us, which assume to guide and control. We believe in the loud and confident and brute force: the soldier or the bully is the man for emergencies.

To remove obstacles, to obtain ends, we look to great means,—means which approve themselves to us as adequate,—slow to learn of experience that the real motive power, the power to go back to, the power to rely upon, the power adequate, is some small and silent thing, hid like the steam in the hold of a vessel, unseen, yet not unfelt. Beneficent, permanent influences come not with observation. An army may overthrow a city, a hurricane waste a country, but behind the army shall follow the genial influence of liberty to build again and

restore, and do what no *force* shall undo; and after the hurricane shall come the smile of the sun and the blessing of the dew, under whose gentle and genial influence the waste shall be repaired and the desert blossom and be glad.

Cæsar, Alexander, and Napoleon, the often quoted types of earthly power, the men of blood and violence, have left nothing behind them. Their empire died with them; while He who would neither strive nor cry aloud, who led no armies, who founded no dynasty, has to-day a mightier empire than tyrants ever dared aspire to. It is a curious fact that Napoleon owned that by gentleness Jesus had attained a power which could not perish, while all that had been done by him through years of blood should waste and perish with him.

"Were I," says a late writer, "seeking for the emblem of an enduring force, I should not select the bronze figure of the emperor, with his glass eying the fortunes of the battle, but another work of art, called 'The Light of the World,' in which Christ is represented at dusk, in his hand a lantern whose beams fall upon his features, and light up his soft, ruddy hair and delicate countenance, and make fruit and flower glow on the soil near his feet, as, while the darkness gathers and the night hovers all around out of the sky, with wistful face of infinite tenderness he proceeds with the other hand to knock at a cottage door." The dwelling and the portal which the painter intended, where are they but within, and what power like that empire over the soul established by the gentleness of Jesus?

Real power, beneficent power, enduring power, comes of gentlest things. It is their influence which is irresistible.

A man rouses himself against any show of compulsion. The antagonist is waked, he is thrown on the defensive. He summons all capacity of resistance, so little is gained. Try gentleness, entreaty, persuasion, love, the milder influences. No man can resist. He may yield sullenly at first, but yield he will and must.

This fact runs through nature and through man in the world, in our intercourse with one another and with God. Let us take examples of the power that resides in things apparently without power. I cannot do better than recite a fable I once met. "There was a gathering together of creatures, hurtful and terrible to man, to name their king. Blight, mildew, darkness, mighty waves, fierce winds, will-o'-the-wisps, and shadows of grim objects, told fearfully their doings, and preferred their claims, none prevailing. But, when evening came on, a thin mist curled itself up derisively amid the assemblage, and said: 'I gather around a man going to his own home, over paths made by his daily footsteps, and he becomes at once helpless and tame as a child. The lights meant to assist him then betray. You find him wandering, or need the aid of other terror to subdue him. I am alone confusion to him.' And all the assemblage bowed before the mist, and made it king, and set it on the brow of many a mountain, where it may be often seen to this day."

Now muster all forces of nature, marshal winds, waves, thunders, earthquakes, and though, in their quick, terrible march, they make a wild and horrid ruin, yet you may better face their power than the silent, subtle force of the mist.

Again, this fleeting, very significant, but not much

known "snow power." And I cannot do better than quote the words of a writer known everywhere for his peculiar ability in such description: "Is there anything in the world so devoid of all power as a snowflake? It has no life. It is not organized. It is not even a positive thing, but is formed negatively, by the withdrawal of heat from moisture. It forms in silence, and in the obscurity of the radiant ether, far above eyesight or hand-reach. It starts earthward, so thin, filmy, and unsubstantial that gravitation itself seems at a loss to know how to get hold upon it. Therefore, it comes down with a wavering motion, half attracted and half let alone. And then it rests upon a leaf, or alights upon the ground with such a dainty step, so softly and quietly that you almost pity its virgin helplessness. If you reach out your hand to help it, your very touch destroys it. It dies in your palm and departs as a tear. If any one should ask what is the most harmless and innocent thing on earth, he might be answered, a snowflake. And yet, in its own way of exerting itself, it stands among the foremost powers of the earth. When it fills the air, the sun cannot shine, the eye becomes powerless. Neither hunter nor pilot, guide nor watchman, are any better than blind men. The eagle and the mole are on a level of vision. All the kings of the earth could not send forth an edict to mankind, saying, 'Let labor cease.' But this white-plumed light-infantry clears out the fields, drives men home from the highway, and puts half a continent under ban. It is a despiser of old landmarks, and very quietly unites all properties, covering up fences, hiding paths and roads, and doing in one day a work which engineers

and laborers of the whole earth could not do in years.

"But let the wind arise (itself but the movement of soft, invisible particles of air), and how is this peaceful seeming of snowflakes changed! In an instant, the air roves. There are fury and spite in the atmosphere. It pelts you, and searches you out in every fold and seam of your garments. It comes without a search warrant through crack and crevice of your house. It pours over hills, and lurks down in valleys or roads and cuts, until in a night it has entrenched itself formidably against the most expert human strength. For, now lying in drifts, it bids defiance to engine and engineer.

"In a few weeks, another silent force will come forth, and a noiseless battle will ensue, in which this new victorious army of flakes shall be itself vanquished. A raindrop is stronger than a snowflake. One by one, the armed drops will dissolve the crystals, and let forth the spirit imprisoned in them. Descending quickly into the earth, the drops shall search the roots and give their breasts to their myriad mouths. The bud shall open its eye. The leaf shall lift its head. The grass shall wave its spear, and the forests hang out their banners. How significant is this silent, gradual, but irresistible power of rain and snow, of moral truth in this world! 'For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be, that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.'"

Leaving the realm of nature, let us come to life. What is more quiet, gentle than love,—not love that is debased into a passion,—for that is a whirlwind and a fire,—but that which burns pure in the heart of man, woman, and child? What is its language? A glance, a tone, a tear. What are its weapons? Tenderness, persuasion, devotion. It may not speak, and only do and suffer; yet it finds its way through the pointed armor in which man's heart is sometimes cased. You can withstand harshness, ill-treatment, chains, persecution, death, but you cannot withstand love. The last hope is gone for that man who can. He has slid out of the sphere of the human down into that of the demon. The coaxing tenderness of a child, the gentle ministrations of a mother, the mild persuasions of a wife, can they not twist you and turn you and rule you as they will? Passion could not do it, ridicule could not do it, law could not, blows could not; but a kiss, an imploring look, a hand laid quietly upon yours, the mere trembling of the lid which foreruns the tear, can break the proudest mood and subdue the most dogged wilfulness. Strike but the cords of the love-harp, and the wildest frenzy of selfishness or passion is tamed. Tyrants have been turned from their bloodiest purposes, revenge has sheathed its thirsting blade, intemperance dashed the cup from its lip, souls that were almost lost have been won again to Christ, not by any threat or strong beseeching, but by the still, silent power of love, by a word almost inaudible,—less than that,—by a tone, a motion, a glance, whose peculiar significance, lost on the bystander, sank into the depths of the heart for which it was intended.

Love is nearer omnipotence than any other human attribute, and it is love that makes the omnipotence of the divine character.

Let us go a little out into society, where man is not bound to man or to be influenced by this delicate sentiment. In social life, who is the strong man, the powerful man? The man of position, or of wealth, or of ability? Not at all. But the man who stoops to the lesser courtesies of life, who despises no little act of kindness, but keeps a warm heart, a quick eye, a ready hand. You see many men about you who rather pride themselves upon their roughness, their manly superiority to the trifling amenities of life; who think it derogatory to them to stoop to the little charities of act and speech. They impress you with a sense of the consideration in which they stand with themselves, while upon yourself all the bustle and assumption of their self-importance are lost. They carry no weight with them, win no regard, obtain no purpose. On the contrary, he who has a regard for what have been called the small, sweet courtesies of life lays aside all selfishness, in honor preferring another; quietly stands aside for another's comfort; without a word, surrenders his claim or preference; is systematically, unfeignedly polite; has a bow, a civility, a pleasant word,— those little things which cost so little, which yet cost so much,—ready for everybody. At home, in the street, in society, he does the thousand nameless acts which are always wanting to be done, but which so few think it worth while to do.

Without any large ability or large act or cost, he is felt to be a kind man and a useful man, a reliable man;

and he wields an influence and obtains a regard that no proud, self-sufficient man can ever know. His little courtesies take large hold of all; and men delight to come within the sphere of his attraction, and breathe the atmosphere in which he moves. They love him for what he does, they listen when he speaks, and are ready to help him when he suffers.

Take another instance still less dependent upon personal interest and acquaintance. Eloquence is a power. And what is eloquence? Not noise and vehemence and effort, not the strained posture and gesture and tone of the theatre, but it is the simple, earnest utterance of some truth which lives in the heart, burns on the lips, glows in the eye, and stamps itself upon the language and in the tone. It is not a thing of teachers and schools, but a thing of the heart and of the moment. What a mighty sway it has! I have seen men get up, and with loud voice and vehement gesture and strong assertion work themselves into a sort of frenzy; and, while those who sat by looked on impassive and wondered why all that was done, they toiled as one who beat the air and accomplished nothing.

I have heard one of another stamp, with subdued tone and folded hand, but with an earnest look and a kindling glow about the eye, say what the heart told him to say, and the contagion spread. All ears were arrested, all eyes fixed, silence deep and breathless filled the place, and every one was lifted up above himself into that divine region into which it was felt that he who spoke was leading the way. Eloquence is no trick of the speech or the body, no magic of well-tuned voice and fine person or a polished manner. It is the

simple, native conviction of one soul uttering itself to the want or apprehension of another. Its word as an electric flush thrills through the heart, spreads through the land, revolutionizes faiths, opinions, governments, laws, upheaves the old foundations of principle and habit, and recreates the man, society, and the nation.

And, last of all, what a power is silence. What so mighty as that impalpable, mysterious presence which wraps about our own hearts, embraces the night? It is the synonyme of mystery and eternity. The hush of the desert, the stillness of the midnight, the muteness of grief, the solitude of one's chamber, what power lies in these, what appeals come up from their dumb lips!

And, then, what terrible power is there in the pauses of a storm, the fitful hush waking a fear deeper than the tumult. What majestic power in the silence of a multitude subdued by some overmastering spirit, touched by some great truth, awed by some sad calamity, or melted and swayed by the sweet music of some gifted lips, bound and controlled at one and the same moment by one and the same sentiment! What noble power in the silence that submits to insult, that reviles not again,— silence that comes of no mean fear, but the love of God in the heart. What withering power in the silence of scorn!

Then, the influences upon character which are deepest and longest and most efficient are not those which are made of set purpose, not those of precept, which have been driven into us by constant repetition, but the silent influences which imperceptibly win our esteem and mould us to their will. We draw near some gentle spirit, and at once we feel an attraction and an

influence, as if some hidden spirit magnet drew us. The very air is impregnated with power we cannot resist. Word, movement, manner, tone, look, without any effort or purpose, throw a nameless charm over us. We are better and holier for the contact, and feel that we have seen and been near and touched by something of the beauty and purity of which the human soul is capable. The power of others over us is in the silent, indirect influence of character and life. What manner of men ought we therefore to be!

It is just so God influences us. He does not seek to subdue us with awful demonstrations of power; not to compel us, but to convince us through the influences of love, and lead us by his gifts. His constant influences are his silent ones. If he sends thunders from Sinai, to man's infancy, it is the dewy stillness and beauty of a summer's morning, when the wondering crowds hear the lessons of the second dispensation. If at times things seem to break away from their divine order and harmony and quiet, the re-established law soon asserts itself, that still his is the gentler way of love. And so Christ coming to our aid, to bring us back to God, took no form of antagonism, as he well might, backed as he was by all the power of eternity, but the simple form of a simple man, the gentle tone and winning manner of a gentle and loving soul, proving by his adoption of this way in the greatest of all works that it was the one true way which should be almighty to effect the intended purpose.

The lesson for us is the folly of passion and force, the uselessness of that in which the world still trusts. The power for us to have and wield is the power that

shall subdue and harmonize all discord within and about us, the silent influence of a considerate and gentle spirit. The gentle spirit of God moving over chaos brought all things into life, beauty, and order; the sweet strains of David's harp loosened the maniac monarch's clutch upon his javelin, and he sank back calm and at peace; the word of Jesus hushed sorrow, and soothed the demoniac, and put back Peter's impetuous sword into its sheath. If we have ever gained a lasting, genuine victory, done a real, abiding good, it has been by no great powers, but through the might of gentleness in us. So shall the world be in the end redeemed. Armies, monarchs, revolutions, must have their way. They shall destroy; but the kingdom of our God, the kingdom of spiritual beauty and everlasting peace, shall come out of the graces of the soul, which attract and win because they are gentle and still.

February, 1856.

VIII.

THE MAN WITHIN.

"The hidden man of the heart."— I. PETER iii., 4.

THERE is an outward man and there is an inward man, a man visible and a man invisible, a man of outer activity and life and a hidden man of the heart. One man other men see, take notice of, judge by. *That* is the daily outward man, the man of speech, of action, of expression, the man that is apprehended primarily by the senses and is addressed to them, which, in our careless way, we are apt to consider the whole man. From what we detect upon the outside, our affection, our prejudice, our reason even, draw their inferences; and the man becomes to us what they decide him to be.

The other man is the hidden man of the heart, the man that no other sees or can see, the man that no other knows or can know. Just as underneath the ocean which we see — which is fretted by winds, moved by tides, lulled by calms, tossed by storms — there is said to be another ocean, whose life finds no expression at the surface, so in us all there lies another man, the currents and counter-currents of whose life are hidden from all mortal knowledge. This is the real man, the man of affections, sympathies, aspirations, impulses, appetites, motives, the things in which life has its root, from which it gets its strength,— the man it has pleased God to hide, to fence in from all intrud-

ing vision, that there might be one secret, sacred place in which the soul, alone with its God, might work out the problem of its existence.

This is God's law, and like all God's laws wise and good. Sometimes, we wish that we could take men down into the secret places of our hearts, its chambers and its galleries, its corridors and niches, and show them what indeed we are, what we want, why we fail, what we aim at, why we do and why we do not do, how we aspire. We long to be revealed to those who walk by our sides, their eyes holden. At times, we weary of our isolation, and long to fling wide the doors and bid all welcome. Discouraged, misunderstood, suffering, we vainly beat at the bars of our prison-house: "Oh, that men really knew us as we know ourselves! Oh, that they could read, not these acts so imperfect, so strange, so contradictory to ourselves even, but the motive that prompts our inmost life, then should we have honor and rest."

But this is only a passing mood. We know that this which God has decreed is well. Experience and observation unite to prove it to us. In our sober moments, we would not, if we could, admit any other into the mysteries of the heart. We prefer that the inner life should be hid. If God had not veiled it, we should upbraid him for his neglect. We will have our hearts as the holy of holies, into which no foot shall pass. Jealously, we guard them against every approach. With pains, we even labor to conceal what men might easily know, and knowing would bless us for. We love to pass incognito through life; and when men penetrate ever so little our disguise, read ever so little the

secret of our being, we baffle and throw them off the scent. Not only those who are worse in their hearts than they pass for in life, but those who are better, seem actuated by the same desire. The good man conceals his best as sedulously as the bad man his worst. Neither is willing that the hidden man of the heart should be revealed. And there are those who perversely put upon the outside that which has no place in the heart, who take a pride not merely in concealing the good, but in affecting the bad which they have not. I doubt if this be right. We ought to accept any inability God may ordain, not increase it. The wilful concealment of the bad or the good is alike wrong. I think God meant we should live out our inner lives just so far as, under his limitations and restrictions, it is possible: where we do not do it, we are deceivers.

There are drawbacks enough of God's selecting and imposing. Under the most favorable circumstances, the outward man does the inward man great injustice. We all, or nearly all, have some infelicity of manner or address, some drawback in look or tone, some original or hereditary inability, very trifling in itself perhaps, which is always saying untrue things of the hidden man. Very few are they who can give expression to that which they want to, just as they want to. How many warm and kindly hearts dwell under dull, prosaic, forbidding exteriors, or express themselves in ways and words that repel rather than win? How many hard and dry faces, like clock dials which have no hands, give no hint of the life within? How many brave spirits lie unguessed within the shrinking and diffi-

dent? How many of earth's noble ones die and make no sign, because they cannot master the native infirmity which hides the inward man. There are barriers enough to a true self-revealing without our raising others. So much of the inner life as we can express we ought to express, so much of the hidden man of the heart as we can reveal we ought to reveal. For it is by showing as much of the hidden man as we may that ourselves are made better, it is by seeing the man that we are that others are helped, encouraged, or warned.

It will not be denied that that which we see is the lowest and least desirable life. It may at first be doubted, but I think it is safe to say, that the hidden man of the heart is always better than the visible man. There is more faith, more patience, more charity, more loyalty to God, more good-will to man, more craving, and more hope than ever yet expressed, more actual attainment. Beautiful as are many lives we gaze on reverently, and perfect as we call them, they are yet more beautiful within: the hidden man of the heart is nearer to God than his works proclaim. Somebody says that the very effort to shape, to embody, to put in language our thoughts, takes something of power and purity from them. The willing spirit imperfectly utters itself through the weak flesh; and its sweetest songs, its truest devotions, its most earnest yearnings, float upward from it, unuttered and unutterable, to the Invisible, and not outward by any uttering of the flesh. And so it is with the weak man and the bad man. Within, he is building better than we know; and, though he fail to fitly frame and firmly build and completely finish the temple God would dwell in, who shall

say that he has no hope, no inner life which, despite instability and failure, God will respect?

The man of annoying and desperate selfishness, underneath, has a better life. His hidden man is a man of self-reproach, unrest, resolve.

The man, cold, proud, stern, who seems to shut out wilfully every tenderness, has a hidden man, longing, aching, to cast off its mantle, and prove the wealth of real life that glows beneath. Approach him rightly, and that strong under-current will break through all opposition in full, rich overflow.

The man of wild extravagance and reckless dissipation, the man who has scoffed at all warning, embittered the lives dearest to him, the man seemingly callous and dead, owns to a hidden man, outraged by this life of self, rebuking it, and moving it many times mightily toward reform. I doubt if in the dens of infamy and vice, amid all the riot and revel of the Sunday's debauch, God does not see in each a life superior to, loathing, the outward life, a hidden life of the heart that could be lifted and redeemed, if we had but a voice like that of Jesus, which could penetrate through the overlying mass of trespasses and sins, but a spirit like his ready to encourage and to help. If we could but take the light and the bread from heaven where most they are wanted, and where they ought to go, we should then do something toward establishing firmly that sorely beset man of the heart, something toward revealing to the individual the man that he is, and help other men to know the life that exists in all, though it may fail to work. We should encourage and confirm it, and enable it to finish its course with joy.

It is well to remember how constantly the Saviour noticed and encouraged the hidden man of the heart.

It is not the word, the deed, the expression of the outer man, of which he takes notice, responds to, but the condition of the hidden man of the heart, whether by miracle, gift, or the power of his own insight. He knew what was in man. It was the inner life, state, want, inquiry, to which he addressed himself; and they to whom he spoke felt that he knew them not as men. Their thought had been read, and what they really needed had been said. As you read the record, many times his answers seem irrelevant. What have they to do with the inquiry? Nothing. But, with the interior condition that prompted the inquiry, everything. He tells just what the hidden man of the heart wanted to know, but dared not ask; needed to know, without knowing what it was he needed. It is not the question of the woman of Samaria, or of Nicodemus, or of Martha that he answers, not the woman, the Nicodemus, the Martha who had spoken, but the hidden desires of their hearts. And, as he made these feel his knowledge and his love, so he made his enemies feel his power, dragging out before others, to the full light of the day, to be gazed upon and despised, the hidden man of the heart, sending cunning scribe and hypocritical Pharisee and crafty ruler again and again from him, stripped of every disguise, the whole inner man laid bare.

And this action of his may well lead us to two special, practical thoughts.

1. It is the hidden man of the heart decides what we are. The outward man cannot do that, though we too

frequently measure attainments, and make our awards by it. You will hear in the world men rated by the outside. That is the world's criterion. A man of pretence or presence, of studied obtrusion and notoriety, of outward profession, carries the palm. Words and deeds, things that can be seen and handled,— these are the elements of man's opinion of man, the coin of our daily currency. But these are not things that make the man. The man is not the man outward, but the man inward. It is thought, purpose, desire, the things of the heart, hidden there, that mould the man, make or mar him. Out of the heart, the Saviour says, come all things evil and all things good. His own work was with the heart. For the things without, he cared nothing. For man's advancement in the world, he had nothing directly to give or to suggest. He has left no rules, no examples, for outer man. The one thing with him was the heart, and the man that lay hidden there. He found it bruised, forsaken, crushed; and he raised it up, healed and clothed it, revealed it to itself, its then degradation and its possible holiness.

That which he said and showed to those of his own time, he says and shows to us. All our life, all our hope, depend upon the state of the heart. If it is all well there, if pure and holy thoughts abide there, if high and noble resolves are formed there, if gentle charities and kind affections abound there, if the virtues and graces cluster there, if among these move a filial faith, and a serene trust renewed to the inward man day by day, we have the all that can be needed for the true life, and the outward man must bear witness to it. The heart cannot have these things in its treasury, and

the life be wholly low, sordid, and false. The good tree, Jesus says, cannot bring forth evil fruit. Let us remember and act upon the converse of that declaration.

2. And, again, it is the hidden man that God sees, and by that he judges. Men judge by acts. God makes no account of them. He strikes at once at the motive. Men punish crimes, deeds, expressions. God punishes intentions, thoughts, desires; and, more, he strikes the balance, impossible to man, between the ever-renewed alternation, the struggle between the good and bad. It is a startling thought, when we give ourselves really to it, that there is an eye can read more surely than we can ourselves every prompting of appetite, every moving of will, every longing of desire, an eye which sees passions petted, habits encouraged, thoughts invited, which we dare not let men know of, which we gaze upon with shame ourselves, which we submit to, even with a nameless horror, while still we hold them. It is a startling thought that God not only sees all that the hidden man of the heart is, but that he makes up his judgment from what he knows that to be. Disguises, with pain and loathing worn before men, subterfuges stooped to while all the better life indignantly rebels, hypocrisies riveted upon the soul, armor of proof before men,— what are these before God, who looks straight down and clean through all, and knows just what lies at the deep springs of life in the heart? What a mad hope that is which men will still cling to, that somehow or other they are going to deceive God, and escape his judgment or palliate his justice. It will be a terrible retribution to many, when the cowering man of the

heart shall be dragged forth and judged; as it will be a joy unspeakable to many, when the voice shall say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

And now two questions come up, which need an answer,— an answer clear and full. What is the hidden man of the heart in us? Is it such as pleases us, as satisfies our idea of life, such as we are willing to have as our record and our witness? In the past has it been all that we could desire? In the present have we nothing to fear, and is the future only radiant with promise? No one who knows the hidden man of his heart can feel wholly at ease, content. Some shadow rests upon the brightest life, some weakness inheres in the strongest spirit, something done or undone makes the best to mourn. The past has waste in it, ingratitudes, neglects. It has heeded too much the many voices which call from without, and heard too seldom the one voice which speaks in whisper out of the silent deep within, and down from the silence above. The present stands upon that past, and it is imperfect; but it is the divine now, the moment God gives for the renewal and for toil. Let us seize and use it, and so answer by our future living our second question,— What ought the hidden man of the heart to be? Let us give ourselves in the fear of God, and as accountable to him, instantly and reverently, to a much neglected work. Let us go down to the bottom of our hearts, and begin there, among the hidden things, the things we think too little of, those of which are life's issues. Let us have nothing within but what is pure and noble in thought and purpose. Let every spirit of evil be exorcised, and the

hidden man of the heart be formed after the image of the Son of God. That is a glorious work to which we are called. Do we think enough of the privilege of being permitted to toil in the same way and for the same end that Jesus did? Do we realize what it is to be worthy to inherit with him glory and honor and immortality?

In all this crowd of men and women moving so variously about us, in all this character written and acted, that which appears is but as the small dust of the balance. Underneath the man seen is the man unseen, the hidden man of the heart, very unlike, often better than the other. The man we thrust before others for their observation, the man we put forth to do life's work, to stand in its counting-rooms, exchanges, in its halls of legislation, in the daily walk of common life, is not the man of the heart, but a man for the place and the occasion,—a man imperfect, a man expressing only in part and feebly, perhaps falsely, what the true man is. The true man lies hid, silently at work, where no eye sees, working more nobly than fancy has painted or poet dreamed. For it has working with it all that is good, the whole host of holy influences, the whole majesty of God and all that Jesus conquered. You may go wherever man has gone, and you shall see about you everywhere, among barbarous as among civilized, on the islands as the continents, the marvels of human skill set up as trophies for the future to look on and admire, and the generations, as they come and go, gaze and marvel. But there is no such achievement of man,—and by and by men will see and own it,—no such trophy, nothing so worthy of admira-

tion, as the heart in man that has withstood the wiles of sense and self, has borne the burden through life's dust and heat, has conquered, as he who was more than conqueror did. It is the perfect work of the perfect man, a life that is hid with Christ in God.

Dec. 18, 1858.

IX.

NONE BUT CHRIST.

"Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."—JOHN vi., 68.

JESUS had said and done many things conflicting so strangely with the hopes of the Jews that many who had hitherto been ardent followers and friends now turned away. Desirous of drawing from his disciples some confession of their feelings, he asks, "Will ye also go away?" Peter, always first, answers impulsively yet sincerely: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

This assertion of the disciple is our assurance. The words of Jesus lead to eternal life. They are the words of truth which shall not pass, though heaven and earth perish. They are the foundation of our faith and hope. They give the will of God as concerns man. They show us our duty, they point us our way. They are the sufficient and only foundation on which we may raise the superstructure of a clear belief and a holy character. If, however, we examine the predominating faith of Christendom, the tenets which men make the separating points between their various theologies, the doctrines which they claim as the distinctive doctrines of the gospel, we shall find them neither stated in nor defended by the language of Jesus. We shall not find

him occupied in establishing the things the establishing of which his followers have held of the first importance. We shall discover nowhere the foundations of church establishment, no nicely drawn distinctions, no elaboration of creed or decree. It is a most singular fact that, though we have a faith called "Christian," yet the foundations of the religion professed by nine-tenths of Christendom are laid in the language of the Old Testament or of Paul. The faith of Christendom is not Christian, but Pauline. Not Christ himself is the corner-stone, but Paul. It is not the simple "truth as it is in Jesus," but the perplexed truth as it is in Paul. Creeds, catechisms, churches, are started from, defended by, the Epistles, not the Gospels. Proof texts, the sharp and ingenious weapons of theology, are not the clear, brief, broad assertions of Jesus, but the more hurried, confused, and doubtful though glowing sentences of the apostle. You will find the texts from most pulpits on Sunday, certainly if the discourse be in any way a theological one, taken from the Epistles, and the doctrine illustrated and enforced by reference to the prophecies of the Old Testament rather than the gospel of the New.* You will be surprised to find how little reliance in past theological controversies has been placed on the words of Jesus; how men have kept from them, as if conscious that they would not countenance such strange and bitter perversions. For one text from him, arrayed in proof of the Trinity or the more commonly received doctrine of the atonement,

*Westminster Catechism supported by 1,200 texts, 624 Old Testament, 811 apostles, 235 Gospels. Justification by faith, 1 from Gospels, 42 from other parts. Original sin, 2 from Gospels, 85 from other parts.

you will find a dozen from Paul; and you will feel that the stress is thrown rather upon these last, that the testimony of Christ is thrust aside in order that the apostle may speak. The argument depends, the proof hangs, upon his word. He is the great head of the Church. His words, imperfectly understood, have given faith to the world. His Epistles, which even Peter found it hard to comprehend, have been made the lamp to men's feet. His thoughts, wrested from their sequence and place, have been used in fragments, and out of such incongruous material has been reared a fabric as unlike the religion of Jesus as the matchless and mighty dome of St. Peter's Cathedral is unlike the wigwam of the Oregon savage. Had not Paul written letters, had not the early collectors of sacred writings put them side by side with the writings of the evangelists, had we only the Gospels, we should have to-day a very different faith and a much higher attainment of holiness, a broader charity, and a clearer hope. This is certainly very curious. One would have said that over and above all other witness would have been the witness who came direct from God, and was himself expressly the commissioned teacher. One would have said that all doubts and difficulties would have been at once and solely referred to him for solution; that, when he left anything, there it was to be left; that humble faith would neither go beyond nor stop this side of him. Those are memorable words of Peter, "Thou hast the words of eternal life," and their application is as broad as eternity itself. But men, in the hot contest of opinion, have forgotten them. They have not found the gospel to be an armory of such

weapons as they needed. The graceful and simple truth, as it fell from the lips of the Saviour, has not suited the wisdom of the world, has not answered the purpose of prejudice and passion, the strife for triumph more than truth. A faith to live by has not been so much their desire as a faith to establish and make triumphant,— not Christ's faith, but their faith,— the faith of their sect or church. The apostles needed no other gospel than that which fell from the lips of the Master. It sufficed their purpose. It was the great antagonist of heathenism. It was that which spoke from Mars Hill, which startled the profligate Corinthians, which made its converts even within the gates of the imperial city. It was that which turned the world upside down.

The word they preached was just that simple word which now meets us on the printed page of the evangelists. They took all men back to Him from whom they had themselves received the words of eternal life. Even Paul, who now stands so strangely above Christ, who is now so strangely quoted against Christ, never taught any other gospel. Little did he dream, when he poured out his full heart in rapid letters to the various feeble churches he had founded,— letters written in the intervals of travel or of pressing business, to meet their immediate wants, adapted to their then condition, —little did he think that these, written as all letters are written, would one day be found in a holy book side by side with the life of his Master, and by many, under the pernicious theory of a plenary verbal inspiration, held to contain other and greater truth than that delivered by that Master himself. Could he have foreseen this, I think he would have put that hand which wrote them in

the fire, and held it there, and watched it consume with a more than Roman courage, rather than it should have been the means of depriving his Saviour of one iota of that honor which is only his. Those letters were never meant as bodies of divinity, never were written as carefully digested treatises, never were intended to be read outside the little knot of believers at Corinth or Ephesus, never were expected to survive the people and the occasion for which they were prepared. How strange that he who so earnestly and eloquently pleaded with the Corinthians, because some were of Paul and some of Apollos, to the forgetting of Christ, should, in these latter days, not only divide the sceptre with him, but virtually be regarded as above him! I sometimes wish Paul had never written an Epistle. We should have been great losers thereby. We should not have known how large a heart was in him, and how meekly that great intellect was bowed before that faith in Christ, and how completely that noble spirit became under it as a little child. We should have wanted some deep and glowing utterances of love and faith, some stirring exhortations, some pungent rebukes, some liftings into a purer atmosphere than this; and all this would have made a void indeed. Yet so perverted have been some words of his, so unduly exalted some of his opinions, so have men mangled his language and mistaken his purpose, that sometimes, for the simple truth's sake, I could wish we had only the four Gospels for our New Testament. As exponents of the character and faith of the men, as showing the condition and position of believers of that day, as containing much for believers of all times, I prize these letters of Paul as I do those of

Peter and John and James. And so long as we regard them as only letters of men to men upon topics then immediately pressing, so long as we consider them as separated by an immense and deep and broad gulf, never to be bridged over from the words of Jesus, so long honor be to them. Valuable are they as the words of earnest, living men,— men who had seen the Lord,— but their place is subordinate, and they must always be kept to it. The words of eternal life are alone with Christ. He is alone the true and living way. To me, the centre and support of faith is the language of the Saviour. Amid all the confusion of sects and jargon of theology, I find repose and assurance there. Bewildered and confused by the assertions and arguments of men, almost doubting my own belief when I see it so confidently assailed and put down by others, it is unspeakably refreshing to be able to go back to Christ, and say, as Peter said, "Thou hast the words of eternal life." More and more, I tire of controversy and divisions among men, the skilful fence of human prejudice and wit. Waste time, waste words, waste ingenuity, waste temper are they, obscuring, not clearing, the truth, the heaping up of sound rather than the advancing of the cause of Christ. My one thought is, "What does Jesus say?" He was of God commissioned. On him was the spirit poured. I find in his life and doctrine no basis for the stupendous theological and ecclesiastical systems which have overawed the world, and I unhesitatingly reject them. To me, they are human only. I cannot conceive of Jesus as a Catholic or a Calvinist, as a Churchman or even as a Unitarian. I find in his gospel no elaborate ritual, no specified

church government, no theology, no accurately expressed creed, squared clipped, and cold. All these things have been after-thoughts, and they are human. It is no arrogance in me to deny them. I base my faith on Christ. Some men may think it a narrow and insufficient basis, that so I cut myself off from vital truth, that so I wilfully blind myself to great and solemn necessities of faith. Some will say that I must go for substance of doctrine to those who came after Christ. I have but one answer and but one hope. It is the answer of Peter, and the hope that grows out of it: "THOU hast the words of eternal life." When Paul follows Christ, I will follow Paul. When he goes beyond or contradicts him, or rather when men say that he does, I will leave him and follow only Jesus, to whom God alone gave the clear truth, in whom alone of all may we put implicit confidence. What faith I have shall rest on Christ and on none other. To me, the Gospels are the way of life, high over all revelations, the anchor to my soul, sure and steadfast.

Take a subject like that of the atonement: a matter which seems so simple and plain, so long as you keep to the words of Jesus, becomes unintelligible so soon as it is mixed up with human theories, supported by fragments of sentences from the words of Paul. I think time, talent, and temper have already been wasted upon it, and much more probably will be. Jealousies have been excited, hard thoughts have arisen, and friendships grown cold; and an injury has been done to the spirit of Christ's religion, far outweighing any good which can arise from discussion of any topic of belief. To me, it seems a useless war of words, which would

never have arisen, had men only gone to Christ as the fountain-head of religious truth, which might be settled at once now, if they would make his words the umpire, and not attempt to go beyond them. We never should have had this theory and conflict but for a mistranslation of a word of Paul. The same word everywhere else translated reconciliation is once translated atonement. If anything is clear and simple, it seems to me it is this, that Christ came into the world to save sinners. Nowhere does he say anything of substitution or the necessity of doing anything that it may be right or safe for God to forgive. Nowhere does he say that his death is necessary to constitute a just ground for the forgiveness of those who repent. Acting as God's representative and in his spirit, he freely forgives those who come to him upon the sole condition of repentance; and when he comes to speak of divine forgiveness, of what sort it is, of its nature and action, he simply relates the parable of the Prodigal Son. All my interest in the subject begins, centres, and ends there. Of the thousand questions that may be asked, I am content to remain in ignorance. They are conceits and delusions of intellect and curiosity, not the legitimate demands of faith. I may easily make them matters of intense interest, and stake my happiness and faith upon some solution of them; but, as a sinner, the only thing really of interest, the only thing I can know, is that, as Christ is true, my sin will be forgiven of God, as the consequence of my repentance and return to him. That is all I care to know, it is all I ought to know. To that repentance and return, I ought to lend all my energies rather than allow my thoughts to be frittered away

upon things started by human ingenuity, or growing misunderstood, out of some phrase or word of Paul speaking or writing to some Roman or Jew, who was to be approached through the medium of his old prejudices and education, to whom language and arguments were to be addressed wholly inappropriate and unintelligible to us. I do not think the simple words of Jesus could for a moment bear any other construction than that God forgives when man repents. Forgiveness is an act of divine mercy, and not an act of barter, in which a something else has been accepted as an offset to the act of pardon. The parable asserts that much, and closes with the welcome given at the return. That ought to be the faith, and the sufficient faith, of all. Where Christ leaves the matter, we ought to be content to leave it. As I read it, I rejoice that there is such a parable upon which we may fall back after wading through the subtleties of thought and language, more nice than wise, in which the plain word of Christ and the loving purpose of God have been shrouded. As I read it, I wonder that men who have that word should ask for anything more, and in their discussions so seldom allude to it. I know there is a great deal that Christ does not say. His silence is perhaps as important a part of his gospel as his speech. He says just enough to make us wish to know more, and yet just what he says is the essential thing; and what he conceals, however pleasant or interesting or seemingly serviceable, is not essential. There is a deep purpose in all this, and we ought to respect it. Had it been respected, instead of libraries groaning under theological text books, and religion rent by conflicting words and

opinions, we should have had a large and broad and free and united Church, embracing all, and a world very much farther advanced in the fundamental necessities of faith and charity. It is not essential to know how God can forgive the sinner, without some penalty or some equivalent for a violated law: that is not our concern. The only essential, the only thing that concerns us, is that God does forgive, when we forsake the evil and do the good. So much Christ says; and, if he is faithful and true, that is all that is to be said. All other questions should be left, while the soul bends itself to the securing of the divine pardon. We do not get any nearer the truth, do not withdraw the veil, by going to the Epistles, taking some disjointed word or phrase, and building it up into an argument for this or that view of the atonement. At best, that is only Paul's view. If Paul says it was necessary that Christ should die before God could consistently forgive, then Paul says what Christ did not say. If true, that is an essential. Consistently, Christ could not have been silent. The parable would have represented the father as saying: "You have offended against my law. Your repentance is not enough. I must have some satisfaction before it can be safe or right to forgive you. Wait here till I find your elder brother, and see if he is willing to bear the penalty. If so, I receive you again to my home, and my arms and my love. If not, depart from me back to your husks." Could the Saviour have been justified in omitting some such conclusion to his parable, if the belief built on Paul is the truth? Not that I believe Paul ever had any such faith, but that men have based such a faith upon what he has said.

Silence here would have been culpable in Jesus. He would have bequeathed us a delusion rather than the words of life: he would have led us into darkness rather than showed us the light. His silence is very remarkable; but it is always the sharp limit between the complete essential truth and the unessential accompaniments of the truth, between what the soul would like to know and what it is of moment that it should know, between what God chooses to keep to himself and what he considers as the broad essentials of salvation. There are never any waste words with him. The truth, so much as man needs to know, the truth, so much as man needs to attain, the truth, so much as man requires for his work,—that is all. It is simply, clearly stated, and there it is left. Over all the rest, the silence which is from eternity, which, despite all men's searching and striving, shall be to eternity, is kept. The assigned limits of Infinite Wisdom it were wise in man to accept and respect.

What can be more grand than a faith built upon the simple words of Christ? Is it not Christ's faith,—the faith that made him what he was? How far above all decisions of councils and churches and synods and sects it is! They have built up stupendous hierarchies. They have spread out faith over a large surface, made it embrace many and minute things, and imposed it upon multitudes. Yet with all its seeming, when you come to compare it with that faith built in the heart and life of Christ, you feel how shallow and unworthy it is. You see what and how much has been done by going away from the words of Christ, and how unlike is prevalent Christianity in its tone and deed to the

spirit of him, the Master. What Christianity needs is to retrace its way to the simple elements of faith as laid down by him, to abandon all human adjuncts and inventions, and sit at his feet in the humble attitude of Mary. What each one of us wants is to abase the pride of his intellect, stifle the rebellions of prejudice, abandon theories and speculations and decrees, and take the simple page of the gospel, the words of Christ, and without any other alloy of any other mind, prophet or apostle, saint or sect, construct for himself a faith. No backward glance after a type, no forward-looking for a fulfilment, no help sought anywhere of any. The corner-stone of faith is Christ, not Paul or Isaiah. The building can only be fitly framed together, can only grow into a compact and goodly temple, when he is the foundation and not another, when he and not another supplies the joints. There cannot be a thorough Christian church or a simple Christian character until we have winnowed our theology and our faith, and separated the chaff which is of man from the wheat out of which is to be made the bread of life.

Do not suppose that, in exalting the words of Christ, I deny the value of the words of Paul. Christ was God's Son, and had the words of eternal life. Paul was an apostle, a man of clear intellect, warm heart, resolute purpose, and ardent faith, yet only and always a man, mistaken and weak as other men. Never did he expect his word would be exalted to the side of that of Christ, or that his letters would be bound in the same precious volume with the life of the Redeemer, and be held equally sacred and important. To Christ I go, and him I believe. He has the words of eternal

life. To Paul I go just as I would to any other man of talent and culture and opportunity. I do not go behind Christ; but I go behind Paul, and weigh his word by the word of Christ, and accept it only so far as it agrees with what the Master has said before. This is the true way, not the way of the majority who accept the whole Scriptures as on one uniform level, each writer of just so much weight, of just such inspiration as every other; but this is the way of scholars, of the candid, and, when the effects of education and prejudice have passed, it will be seen to be the way of common-sense. There are many great truths in the Epistles, many which one at once recognizes as kin with the truths of the Gospels. There are many things hard to be understood, many blind things; and it is these, and not the simple and plain, which have done the mischief and turned men away from the plain way,— these, and not the simple and plain, which men bring forward and contend about, and make fundamental and construct doctrines and sects out of,— these which have filled dungeons, fed the stake, deluged the world with blood, and maddened men with hate, and to-day divide and cripple the Church, and perpetuate prejudice and ill-will among the sects. This is neither treating Christ with respect nor the apostles with respect. It is playing tricks with our own wit. It is making the dark places obscure the light. It is setting aside the sure word for an uncertainty. It is interpreting Christ by Paul rather than Paul by Christ, making the scholar above the Master, the disciple above his Lord. In the course of one's own thought or reading, he will find very much to perplex him. That is inevitable. So many things

are asserted that one soon gets puzzled. It never need be long however, only long enough to turn to the words of Jesus. What the compass is to the helmsman when the mist shuts him in upon the sea are the words of Jesus to the soul befogged and befooled by the philosophies of sects and schools. They are the words of life; and he who steers by them must avoid shoals and rocks, and enter the appointed haven. Well shall it be for us individually and for the great cause of the truth, if we shall throw aside whatever is more or less than the word of Christ, and have the sure faith of Peter that there is none other to whom we can go; for none other has the words of eternal life.

As I understand it, friends, it is the proud distinction of Unitarianism that it alone of all the sects builds upon Jesus Christ, his words, his spirit, his life. We alone have the single stone Christ Jesus at the head of our corner. Not the Old Testament, not Paul or Cephas, not tradition of the Father, not council, synod, creed, pope, bishop, or presbyter, not anything of any man's devising, not any opinion or dogma about this, that, or the other, but on Christ alone, and his words of eternal life, we take our stand. What other sect does the same? What one creed can you find expressed in gospel language, indeed sanctioned by gospel spirit? You cannot twist the Gospels into the word "Trinity": they utterly refuse to do it. With the Gospels in your hands, you would never dream of the popular doctrine of the atonement. From the Gospels, you could never deduce the theory of the fall and of man's reprobate nature, and out of them you cannot draw the popular idea of regeneration; and only by the baldest servility

to the letter, and contradicting the word that "flesh and blood cannot enter" the future kingdom of God, can you find the theory of physical hell torments in brimstone and flame. The living words of the eternal gospel give no sanction or refuge to the faith preached in Christendom, so hostile to that once delivered to the saints.

The religion of to-day is not the Christian religion; and, whatever else may be builded upon it, the kingdom of the Redeemer so will never come. The Gospels alone are the sufficient guide and way into that. They are corner and buttress, they are foundation and turret cap, they are spirit and life. What they say is simple and plain. What they tell of God and man, of sin and salvation, of duty and of destiny, who runs may read. To forward the simple truths of Christ, and not the confused dogmas of men, Unitarianism exists and toils, watches, prays, and waits. What Luther said of the Church is pre-eminently true of us. "The Church heareth none but Christ."

June 29, 1873.

X.

SEASONS OF QUIET.

"A place which was named Gethsemane." — MARK xiv., 32.

THERE is a little spot just across the Brook Kedron, under the Mount of Olives, which has a history. It is known as the Garden of Gethsemane, a name peculiarly sacred to us, which we never mention except with a something of tenderness. The name originally, literally, means simply the place of oil-presses. It was there that the gathered olives were brought and there pressed. How circumstances change and ennoble names! This is all we know about it. Three of the evangelists allude to it, only two of them giving it a name, and none of them stopping to enlighten the curiosity or faith of an inquiring world.

For some cause, probably its seclusion, near the city and yet apart from its bustle, it became a favorite resort with the Saviour. It was there, many times, he withdrew with his disciples, in hours of more intimate communion, when he turned aside from contention with scribe and Pharisee, and endeavored to explain himself and his word to his chosen companions. In this, he was hardly doing more than following the custom of the times. The rabbi, the Jewish teacher, had his chosen place of instruction and intercourse; and here, uninterrupted, he could impress himself upon the minds

of those who were not only his pupils, but a sort of intermediate class, between himself and the people, through whom he made himself known to and felt by the common mind. The philosopher of Greece gathered around him the young men who joined themselves to him. They had a chosen place for meeting; and the shaded avenues near Athens, where Plato taught, are as much connected with his philosophy as Gethsemane with our faith. So there was nothing peculiar in the selection by Jesus of a special band of pupils or disciples, or of a quiet place of resort where he might have them all to himself for uninterrupted communion and instruction, where questions might be asked and answered, parables, purposely left dark to the unbelieving, explained, and the innermost life and purpose of the Master laid bare before the pupils. There is not a pleasanter picture in the range of gospel history than that suggested by an evangelist, who speaks of Jesus as withdrawing from the angry discussions and troubles of the day, and quietly, at its close, explaining to the disciples the things which had confused them, which he refused to make plain to his captious questioners. Gethsemane became endeared to both Master and disciple by such meetings and unfoldings. They so drew nearer to each other and to him, and were made to feel that he was not the great, mysterious Being to them that he was to others, but their loving friend as well as Master and Teacher. The effect produced upon them is evident. They never feared to ask him any questions, expected to have light thrown upon dark things in their moments of privacy. But Gethsemane was not merely a place to which Jesus resorted with his

disciples. No place so likely to have witnessed those vigils of which we have vague hints, which seem to have held so important a part in the inner life of the Master. When at Jerusalem, more than ever must he have craved and sought these seasons of solitude, which seem always to be forerunners of some new, more arduous duty, some brave exposition of truth, some rarer exhibition of power, some completer act of self-surrender. For it was at Jerusalem that his chief trials came, that his most earnest testimony was borne, that the rare heights and depths of his submission and endeavor were touched. In the country, he had comparative quiet, found warm friends, willing ears, honest hearts, ready followers. Jews of Jerusalem followed him there to poison the minds of the people, to counteract an influence they felt to be hostile to theirs; but the real people of the country believed and loved him, and his enemies gained little. In the city was his hard work; and when weary, depressed, longing for rest, for self-communion, and that nearness of God which seems to have come to him peculiarly, as it does to us, when alone, it was the near quiet of that place, already consecrated by sweet intercourse with his chosen friends, that ministered to and refreshed him. You who have toiled and suffered, who in perils and sorrows have felt how the noise and presence of life grate on your spirit, who have found some hallowed spot,— spot hallowed by some dear memory, sacred as the resting-place of some cherished love, to which you turn with yearning, in which you find the heaven not only dropping low to your trial, but opening to your faith,— you who know the refreshing and hope that spring from the

quiet and seclusion of such spot, who go back to your burdens, your duties, your fears, as if touched afresh with consecrating fire from heaven, who find your tears wiped, your sorrow soothed, your trust renewed, and your way, however steep, more tolerable,— may know somewhat of the spirit in which Jesus sought that spot, somewhat of the power and peace which went out from it: you will realize how large a part it played in his unrecorded history, and how dear it was.

There was a change in the life of Jesus. Its days of action, of charitable deed, of friendly intercourse, were over. His work was done. Life's busy scenes were closing behind him. No more in the temple should men hear his words of wisdom. Not again should the crouching sinner meet his eye of pity, and depart forgiven. Never more should terrified parent cry to him to save his child, or weeping widow or sister embrace again the restored lost. Never more should the dwellers in Galilee watch for and rejoice at his coming. Not again, in the hush of day, should the friends meet at the old trysting-place, and talk over the things that they heard and ask of what they failed to comprehend. The short earthly career of the Son of God was finished. Clouds and darkness and terror shut down heavily about him. One of his own was gone out to betray him for a paltry pittance. The bold, confident man, who just now had promised to die with him, was already sleeping at his watch, and would soon deny that he knew him. Gethsemane, the place of quiet, is now the place of struggle; and he who had found there before only peace, in a more than mortal agony, seeks peace again. A terrible strife it is. We cannot

fathom it. We stand dumb before that simple record of great drops of sweat, as it were of blood. We bow subdued and silent in presence of that last conflict. Theology tries to explain, grows quarrelsome over it. Faith is humbled and silent. The disciples sleep. As if craving sympathy, Jesus turns to them; and then, as if rebuked, he turns to God. Anon, he seeks them, and then again turns back to God. We shall never know the mystery of that conflict until all mysteries are unveiled. You who have suffered, who have had terrible crises in life, do you not understand something of this grasping at help from man, and then, because of baffling rather than of faith, turning to God,—turning again from God, because he was not quick to give what you desired, or gave only what you were not ready to receive, to turn again, craving, yearning, back to God? That is a very human struggle which Gethsemane that night witnessed.

There is a change again in Gethsemane. The full moon looks down clearly into the garden, and all is peace. The struggle is over. Jesus is victor. The great end is gained. The cup that might not pass is accepted. It shall be as God wills. The sharp cry of agony is hushed before that prayer of prayers, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt." The step of the traitor is heard. Calmly, Jesus awaits him and receives the fatal kiss, while the astonished guards shrink from their duty. He wears no laurel, he is captive, he is led to death; but even they read his victory. Poets and painters have tried through their separate arts to give us an idea of this struggle and its results, but they fail. Faith itself is not sufficient. The garden, so dear to

all because of its pleasant intercourse, so sacred to Jesus from its hours of self-communing, so memorable because of that great strife, is made by its conquest the central point in the reverence. Not the cross itself has had more to do with making and intensifying love and gratitude to the Saviour than that garden scene, into which, when the victory was gained, angels with their soothing and strengthening ministries came. You who have suffered and have known the struggle of Gethsemane have gained little, unless you have known also its victory.

The teaching of Gethsemane is threefold,— quiet, struggle, victory. Is not this just the course all human souls must run before finding themselves in that perfect peace with God which has but a single utterance, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt"?

It is a great mistake in these lives of ours that we do not have more quiet,— not a mere dull, lethargic rest, but a quiet that comes from God, and the soul's rest in him. How busy, absorbed, harassed our lives are, as if there were never to be a break in this vigorous, active existence, as if there were no higher, no superior demand made of us. We are educating ourselves with zeal and thoroughness for every duty and contingency of the market and the exchange. I do not suppose the world ever saw men more magnificently equipped for every sort of material enterprise. I do not suppose the world ever saw powers of mind and body more thoroughly trained for temporal conquest and success than shall be found among us to-day. And for these the bustle and excitement and association, the interchange of thought, the combination of various ability,— the

marked features of our day,—are essential. But there is a life which cannot live in this atmosphere, a life not to be made of this material. As the other waxes, it wanes; and, in all the press and overplus of activities, it fades and dies. Jesus himself could not keep the divine life in him up to its healthy tone save by getting out of the whirl in which daily life held him, and getting by himself, finding, making quiet,—quiet that had not merely rest in it, but God. And, if such as he needed such seasons, how much more we! How much we miss, of how much we fail, through want of them!

There is for every one of us the Gethsemane of trial, of mental struggle, the hour and power of darkness. Laugh now and be happy as we will, the time comes to all; and there is not a more hopeless, helpless mortal than the man who has been both brave and wise in every complication of life, when he finds himself introduced to the society of a new class of experiences, and when, instead of compelling men and things to submit to his will, he must himself submit to the will to which he has been stranger. It is sad to see how utterly such a one wilts before the presence of sorrow and trouble, how little he knows what they mean or how to use them, to whom to go or how to go to Him. It is sad to see the giant prostrate and grovelling, or fumbling blindly for support.

What all need is to prepare for trial. There is no sure result in life for which a wise man does not prepare himself. No man expects to accomplish an end for which he is unprepared. That is the decision, the wisdom of the market-place. What so grave, so heavy, so sure, as trial, sorrow, loss, the grand disci-

plines of God? And how can they be met, except they be prepared for, except by seasons, it may not be long, but frequent, in which the soul shall insist upon the world's taking its proper subordinate place, while it invites the visits of a better spirit, and seeks to sanctify itself by self-purging and divine communion, that it may know itself and God,— seasons not annual, prolonged, but at every moment of need? Trials coming to us, then, as the dealings of a Being whom we know, whose love we cannot doubt, to whose will we bend, will work their cleansing and healing.

We may struggle as Jesus. We may cry to have the cup pass. We may say before we can feel the prayer of perfect resignation, for Gethsemane is ours.

Victory must follow, the undisturbed serenity of a soul at one with God, by quiet, through trial to peace, that peace which Jesus said he gave, but not as the world. There is no more enviable condition than that of him who has been led by the trials of his condition into the great peace, who has made the pressure of adverse things the means of a deep faith. Talk of worldly successes, if you will; point to honors and dignities and powers, and call them life's great good. There is no good so great as that which the soul has itself wrought and secured, through its overcoming faith. There is no man so great, so honored, so successful, and so happy as he who through much tribulation has entered into the spirit of acquiescence in a divine ordering he cannot understand, who has so conquered his own will that it has become merged in that of God.

Oh, what high things we talk of! How much above

are they! We strain and reach up toward that excellence. We know it is all true, we wish we were pushing toward that victory; but, alas! it is not so. When shall it be? When the Master's life has for us more charm than the charms of the world, when we can spare seasons for withdrawal and refreshing, when we shall feel that we cannot afford to slight means of which he felt the necessity, when life's grave trials find us prepared by a knowledge and service of God to accept his discipline, acquiesce in his will; when, having kept the conditions, we shall achieve the inevitable victory.

Let us not lose, forget, slight the teachings of Gethsemane,— the place of quiet, the place of struggle, the place of victory. Let its history awaken not merely sentiment or gratitude, but desire to possess the like spirit; and, when our days of trial darken about us, may we have so trained our souls in quiet that our struggles shall have the great and perfect triumph.

March 1, 1863.

XI.

THE FIERY FURNACE.

"Nor the smell of fire had passed on them."—DANIEL iii, 27.

IT is a very wondrous story. No miracle recorded in the life of Jesus violates more the laws of nature as we understand them. The statement is very explicit. These officers of the king who were Jews refused to bow before the golden image which Nebuchadnezzar, the king, had set up. They are brought before him, and remain obdurate. Their answer is very noble: "We are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning, fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of thy hand, O king. But, if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." There was of course but one reply. As in the later day of Christian persecutions, when the recusant was remanded to the lions, were these ordered to the fiery furnace, in the king's wrath heated seven times hotter than was wont. And the mightiest men of the army, lifted them to throw them in, but fell dead before the fearful heat; but the men were not touched, and, lo! as the king looked in, four unburned men. And the king called them out, and the three came out. And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's coun-

sellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was a hair of their heads singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.

Life is to man that fiery furnace, and there are two fates for him which there were here. Some fail before its heat, fall early, and, blasted, are licked up by the flame, as the stubble of the field. They scarcely enter life when they fall before the blighting breath. The training of home, example, warning, entreaty, avails nothing. They have had all that can be given them, are as well fortified as others; and yet pleasures and temptations, vanities and self-esteem, leap upon them. They have no apparent power of resistance, and they wilt at the first hot breath. Again and again have we seen it, that life has opened with every promise. The young girl, the young man, has stepped into it, to waver and fail,—the tempting things too strong, the seducing things too fair, the glittering things too real. I do not mean to say they have sunk into any great and positive sin; but they have turned away from the things they have been taught are life's foundations and hope, and have given themselves over to the spirit of the world, that corroding canker, which eats into and eats out the life of so many hearts, and destroys the better self as nothing else can, which is not the fault, mistake, vice of the elder or the wealthy, of the hackneyed in the world's way, the veteran devotee at the shrine of pleasure, but on young people making its first deep furrow very plain and sometimes indelible, and across a spirit that had seemed of better metal. I think it not to be hardly pressed upon them, when the

young waver as life opens itself to them, when they begin to take the handling of themselves and see the thing that life seems to be, now that they are their own masters. It is not a thing to be wondered at that they should bow before the hot simoom which sweeps up its unwholesome blast, where they had hoped only for gales sweet and gentle as those of Araby the blest. It is like the wavering of raw troops under the first fire,—not cowardice, but the awe of a new experience. If it be not quickly met and mastered, it becomes fear and disgrace and rout. So the wavering of the young, if it be only wavering. If there be moral power of self-recovery, if they turn again to principle, if they put the world in its place, assert, and assume mastery, it is all well. It must be done at once, however, or the fatal habit comes that overmasters the habit that we see is settling down upon and overmastering those young people, whose one law is the decree of society, whose one master is the whim of fashion, and who let the fire taint creep over and fasten itself upon them, till they bear it as a conscious presence, everywhere live and move and have their being in it. I say the wavering is not in itself a sin; but the yielding is, the falling before the flame, the moral death that follows.

The men we read of stood safe within the jaws of the fiery furnace. So some men and women in this world furnace. But they did not stand alone. Can we? I do not know what it means that one, as in the form of the Son of God, was with them. That is not an Old Testament phrase. It occurs nowhere else. The miracle would seem to be because of his presence. I do not believe any satisfactory solution of the diffi-

culty can be arrived at, unless it be supposed that the book was written later than its purport, or that the passage has been interpolated. Even then, men will differ.

But there can be no doubt about this: that it is the spirit of the Son of God with man that keeps him unscathed amid the heats and flames of the fiery furnace his soul finds itself in,—not the person, not the confession of a faith in, a definition of him, not the placing him in the Trinity, but the spirit. However much we may differ, when we come to definitions, all Christians agree in this: that there is something resident, permanent, in the world, something of influence that Jesus, departing, left behind. We can trace other lesser influences to other lesser men. No one lives to himself, no one dies to himself. The influence we all of us exert is not much at the moment, as in what is left behind outliving the deed. Whether you regard it as a special something unlike as superior to all else, whether it is only in degree and quantity that Christ's influence differs from others, still this is true: that there radiates from that point of the world's history as centre, from him as centre of it, power, influence, special and peculiar, producing results which have changed the whole character of man, the individual, made everything anew. As the sun, coming up out of the darkness of the night, touches, tinges, glorifies nature, draws out all secret colors and odors, nothing that it rests upon but feels and shows that coming, and is changed into its utmost by it, so with Christ's coming. If you undertake to change it, you do what you do when you undertake to change the aroma of a flower: first, you cannot do it;

and, secondly, you destroy the thing in the process. The weary world has been at this analyzing of the spirit of Jesus till, in analysis, we are in danger of losing the thing itself.

See how, if I were to take away truth from this furnace scene, it would be this,— and I think it would make a good point against some current theology,— the men are seen with one who is in form like the Son of God. He is not burned to save them; he does not take all their peril and suffering upon himself; they do not go free because everything is laid upon him. The men are safe because he is with them in their trial, a presence soothing and sustaining. And I take that to be just the secret mystery of the whole thing. We are saved by having the Christ spirit with us, by keeping by it,— not made safe by his destruction, not by anything he does for us, but by the power of resistance we have while he is with us, by a something we get of him that we could not have alone; and, were it in the New Testament, I should take this scene as an allegorical statement, of just what the Son of God is to the human soul,— that presence, aid, influence, because of which all fiery assault is powerless, because of which even the smell of fire will cleanse. How have men lost the real point and grandeur and power in their faith through that many-sided idea of substitution, through that latent cowardice which grasps the idea of one suffering for them rather than of standing with them.

The thing he left them was not his blood as some external cleansing mystery, but his spirit, the influence of that which in him had been the triumphing power.

He breathed that upon them, fragrant with the fragrance of two worlds. He left his peace,— the peace of his spirit the peace which grows in us through his spirit,— not as the world giveth, not as the world understandeth, not as the world taketh again, to remain and bless and sanctify. He did not go from, he remained with. His body was withdrawn, but that which was really his life remained, touched to new light and power, transfigured as every life is by his going away. I do not see in life what element of strength there is for me in this something supposed to be done for me by the death of Christ, a manipulation by some dead and carnal thing of years long gone. But when you speak of a spirit, an influence with me, if I will, coming out of that life, akin to that I feel coming out of other lives, like that which has come from my father's life, my mother's life, from good lives I have met or read about, differing in quantity rather more than quality, the same thing, only multiplied by the power of his superior excellence, then I understand it. It enters into me, becomes a power with my powers. It helps me. I can lean upon it, be guided by it, be strengthened in it. But I cannot understand how a physical thing, like blood, is to have any effect upon my moral condition. It subverts old foundation law of nature, broad as the universe and with no exception, that like produces like. The moral cannot invade the physical realm: the physical cannot override the moral.

It is the influence of that spirit which keeps us, not from the burning of the furnace only, but from even the smell of the fire upon our garments. Jesus prays, not

that his disciples should be taken out of the world, but that they be kept from the evil. There is such a thing as "being kept from the evil": there is such a thing as going through life without the smell of the smoke upon us. In our business, necessity has continual means by which our valuables may be securely locked against the harm of fire. A safe fire-proof is part of every merchant's furnishing. These have been tested again and again by the most fiery tests, yet have delivered their valuable deposit untouched, not the smell of the fire passed upon them. In this world, just that our hearts may be safes against which the heats and flames of passions and temptations may exhaust themselves in vain, where we may keep uncharred the soul's most precious possessions, while, as with a charmed life the man or woman pursues his way unspotted from the world, not the taint even of its smoke passing on them, the spirit of Christ within — our own spirits made consonant with his, kept in unison, a spiritual asbestos — is the fire-repelling power.

One of the hottest, most uncomfortable days of the summer, we rode wearily and wretchedly in the saloon of a New York car. Heat and dust, the stifling air and sparks and cinders, combined to make the hours one lingering torture. We fanned and washed and drank, and tried to sleep, to read to forget, to no avail. We were grimed as the smith or the miner,— a spectacle to men, surely, a misery to ourselves. Yet all day long sat quietly in a corner a young girl, alone, her eye upon her book, sweet to look at, cool, without fan or water. And not a speck of cinder or of dust seemed to touch garment or face, not a fly teased, not a flit-

ting of unrest or impatience crossed her face,— she blessedly oblivious to all companions' sufferings, and coming to her journey's end just as placid and calm as she had begun it hours before, hundreds of miles away. Her very face showed that she was possessed of a meek and quiet spirit; and the uncertain things, the annoying things, would no more come near her than the vile things would come near the virgin, who with naked feet in the night-time, according to old legend, perambulated fields and meadows to keep off mice and vermin which endangered the planted seed. I do not think I shall ever forget it; for I felt then, as I feel now, that it is just that way we want to carry our souls through these trying and polluting things of time, and to come in at the end of the travel, through the might of a calm and triumphing spirit, out from the midst of all worry and temptation, *without taint.*

Cannot this be? Have we got to smell of the corrupting things? May not our lives have the rich, pure fragrance of pure things? Every life savors of that it consorts with. According to what we are, the inner society we have had, what lives we lead, is the fragrance we cast out into the world. That decides whether we taint the atmosphere or perfume it.

The smell of the world's smoke invests many as with an atmosphere pungent as that which boys carry about them when they have made spring fires of garden rubbish. Ambitions, conceits, selfishness, love of praise, lust,— these exude insensibly to the man as odors do. You do not need to know detail. The smell of the fire betrays, and that is enough.

To virtues there is the same subtile power. You

speak of the atmosphere of such a one, of the influence of his mere presence, that it tones, represses, cheers as the want may be. It is not inevitable, because in the world, that we imbibe its grosser flavors. We can be as pure in it as the violet, which, if it takes up any thing out of the surrounding filth, so makes it over that it breathes from it again only as the gentlest and sweetest breath. That is to be our way. Inevitably, much about our daily lives is impure and degrading, low, and tending to lower us. We come in contact with and are affected by it.

But we can so take it, so through the subtle alchemy of a filial spirit transmute it, so shed away impurity and dross, so in the soul's alembic refine away all grossness, that it shall become a new life, and issue again from us, its earthly parts touched to nobler issue, its residue acceptable to the kingdom of heaven.

Men and women say they must have the earth taint. That is because they grovel. They say, in the world, the smell of its fire must cling to them. That is because they are willing to be soaked in it, and will not exert the wisdom of the violet or of God's law, and make all that touches them sweet by the power of the sweet life within. The purest lives I have known have not been those carefully screened from the world, but which, coming up in it, have *kept themselves* unspotted. The sweetest and truest have grown and ripened under conditions you would say most hostile, but which have been wrought into the means of a grandly elevated faith and life, attesting, against our laziness and cowardice, the truth of the example as the words of Jesus. No man more exposed than he, yet the smell of the fire passed not on him.

Out of the hard conditions about him, he wrought the excellence we admire and adore; by fighting and repressing them, grew to his matchless stature. The crown of his immortality, though twisted of thorns, has borne the undying aroma of its fragrance to the ages. In the world, because of the world, was it done. The same conditions ours: the same fidelity will make of us those upon whose garments no smell of the fire will pass. Is it not worth prayer, watching, and toil?

XII.

FAINT, YET PURSUING.

"Faint, yet pursuing."—JUDGES viii., 4.

IT was a great victory which Gideon's band of three hundred had gained over the Midian kings, not by their swords so much as by the fright of their midnight attack. The kings, however, had escaped; and the pursuit had been long and keen. Weary and hungry, the brave three hundred paused, faint as they were, only long enough to ask bread at Succoth and again at Penuel, in both places churlishly refused. Postponing vengeance until their end was accomplished, they pushed steadily on over the Jordan, overtook the vanquished, the kings, returned by the way of the inhospitable cities, terribly punished them, and then went rejoicing to their homes to make Gideon judge, and to give the land a peace of fifty years.

No more striking picture of a restless, consecrated energy is presented us in the Scripture than this pursuit of the three hundred, who, taking nothing with them but their swords, held to their one task until it was accomplished. We can follow them in our thought, hungry, weary, refused aid of those of whom they had a right to demand it, faint, yet pursuing, a great purpose shielding them against danger and hunger and fatigue, holding them up where most would fail, and

bringing them out conquerors over every disadvantage as over every foe. We could hardly take a better example for our help at just this point we to-day touch.

For this is the last day of the year; and the last day of a year is apt to find us, who have any habit of introspection at all, like those men at the fords of the Jordan, "faint," not so much depressed as faint,—faint in heart, faint in faith, faint in hope, in effort, down among the despairs, very near the giving-out point, the giving-up point. Something in the season seems to add to a something in ourselves to take the heart out of us. Self-dissatisfaction has become self-discontent; and self-discontent has run well down to that hopeless state, which says: "Well, it is no use to try. I do not make head. Prayers, efforts, tears, all seem vain. I drift toward the bad. I had better give up, and done with it." Somehow, when a man is at this point, he coaxes himself with the idea that going thoroughly wrong, abandoning himself to the seethe of the vortex, will be a relief. Those who do not go so far are yet a good deal faint before the review of a year.

It has been a pretty serious struggle with ourselves, with circumstances, with men, with Providence. We have not had just what we wanted to have, either from man or from God; and we have not been just what we wanted to be. It is a varied disappointment, many-shaped, many-hued; and clouds and vapors obscure our sun, and settle close about us, chill, damp, all tone gone. Not our own shortcomings merely, but all manner of thwarting has stepped in to interfere with the better man we hoped to be; while, added to the depression of

a very generous amount of self-blame, is the opposition from a certain set in things for which we are in no way to blame. And it all combines to set us in the same tone of spirit that one is in who in his business affairs is faced by a year of mishap and disaster, partly his own mistake, largely the general attitude of things. It is not a very satisfactory back look when one comes to measure himself at any stage of life with his ideal, with the thing he promised himself he was going to be. It is a very poorly realized actual that stands by the side of the promised ideal; and, when one sets his accumulating difficulties side by side with his waning years, it is apt to bring an almost unconquerable weariness and deadly faintness, an unwillingness to work more, a hopelessness of effort, apt to make him the victim of depression rather than the creature of new energy and resolve. The shortcomings urged upon us by a very persistent conscience are perhaps the most uncomfortable experiences of the year; and, as the sun sinks, our horizon is one of clouds and glooms.

It is not quite a happy season with us, that which first precedes the bright wishes of others for our happy New Year. We go down pretty low, reach our deepest point of self-dissatisfaction and discouragement. It does not do us a bit of harm. It is pretty unpleasant to have to hide your face before yourself; to stand in the presence of conscience, the most unrelenting of judges, and feel that you deserve what it is telling you; to know that there is no cunningly hidden corner into which it will not follow you; to feel that the only plea or palliation you can make must shape itself into the anguish cry, "Miserable man that I am." It is un-

pleasant, but it is good, it is encouraging. When a man gets a contrition, it is pretty evident that he is not all wrong: he is just in the condition to begin to be right. What he wants is courage and faith,— not to be faint and lie down and die, but to start in stern resolve again,— to call upon everything within him, and to ask for everything God can give to him.

Annoying as it may be, terrible as it may be, one of the most healthy as most hopeful things is a *healthy* self-dissatisfaction,— not the morbid, useless picking to pieces of one's self, which results in that worst despair, the abandonment of all hope and all control of one's self, but that which wakes into the spur and impulse of the future any shortcomings of the past.

First. I conceive this thing to be only true; and though it sound paradoxical to the ear, to experience it is a fact, and a valuable one, that, when one is faint, that is the time of all others to pursue, not to give up, but to keep on. The time to hope most of your harassed horse is just at the point of giving out, when, if you make the right approach, he will spring freshly at his collar, and with a sublime energy, though utterly prostrate before, pull through. The time to carry a boy through his task is the moment most miss, just as he droops to faint, and needs only the right summons to make the victory his.

The real time to work is when indolence most tempts, is most fertile and ingenious in expedient and argument. You do best work then, if you will. On the field of battle, the time to expect men to do, to call confidently upon them, is as the faintness comes when pallor is on the face, but has not touched the

heart; before it has control, tainted that *morale* which is an army's, as a soldier's, safety. The true moment at which to call upon one's self to take any new step in virtue is at the fainting point, when it would be so easy to drop all and give all up: when, if you do not, you make of yourself a power,—as one being overcome by the deadly torpor of frost rouses himself, and in the grapple for life, just at life's lowest ebb, secures it.

Hugh Miller, whose chosen companions and friends were the classic writers of English literature, tells it of himself that, under the influence of discouragement and fatigue, he had begun to yield to the temptations to drink, so plenty and mighty among the laboring classes, when, retiring one night to his hour of reading, he found the stately sentences of Bacon emptied of all their noble meaning. The resolution taken at that hour of conscious debasement was ever after kept.

It is the struggle at the greatest point of depression, the determination not to be overcome, the standing firm in the conviction that day is not far away at the darkest hour of night, which not only shows the quality of best courage, but does the best work. There may be reasons for giving up, but that one is faint, discouraged, disappointed, tried, not among them. They are reasons rather for *not* giving up.

As he is really the true general, who can take an army at the point of defeat and compel a victory, as Sheridan at Winchester, so is he the true man who shall take himself at the point of fainting, and compel himself to keep up the pursuit, not overcome by the past, but confident, hopeful for the future.

Suppose you have been unwise, weak, sinful; suppose you have gone on and on, wildly, recklessly; suppose you have pinched your immortality into the corset of self-indulgence, and starved your soul by the surfeit of your senses, and in the great moment of review, of self-reckoning, you have only a wretched past facing you, and you stagger and faint with the thought of the burden,— the thing you are and the consequences to come: shall you lose all heart, and utterly, deadly faint, become utterly useless and worthless, a sort of moral limp, neither form, muscle, nor sinew?

The writer of the Book of Proverbs says, "If thou faint, thy strength is narrow"; and narrow strength is not what a man wants who has any real living to do.

One of the wisest, noblest, most wholesome things ever said by man was said by Paul, a man of no narrow thought, "Forgetting the things behind, I press on," —not ignoring them, not fainting under them, but setting them aside, getting them out of the way of hindrance, I press on. If any man had a right to faint, he had. Though he said he forgot the things behind, it is evident they ever teased his memory; but, when they would possess him, then only the more he possessed himself, and pursued, reached forward. It showed that he was, in the best sense, alive; it showed that he was not satisfied,—healthily not satisfied; it proved that he did not think there was nothing for him to do but mourn or mope, that he had not reached the region of despair, that he could not, must not faint, so much was to be done. Once there might have come to him, as to many a man, when he has first seen the demand laid upon him, the pallor of the

cheek, the faintness at heart, as he faced, in all its new revealed enormity, his mistake, and saw what it must cost to retrieve his error; but that was only for the moment, long enough to rally and gird on his resolve and take the first step toward the great manhood of his after-life. Dark as the behind, there soon glowed upon his courage and faith the brighter beyond, a painful but not a benumbing contrast with the by-gone. He saw the grand, colossal ideal towering above his actual pygmy self, saw the great thing he might grow into, and without a pause, faint now and again it may well be with the many buffets and weary contests, yet without pause, without rest, fearlessly and always pursuing what he saw to be the one great duty from the moment he fell in Damascus road till his life of zeal and sorrow found its triumphant close. To be thus restless, thus dissatisfied, is only a sign of health. We may not fancy it; we may try to get away from it; we may run it into a sickly, depressing sentiment, but, properly managed, it is an essential to the soul's growth. The vain wear and worry of sick fancies and impossible desires, with which some men and women fret themselves, making the past useless and the present hopeless, is one thing and a poor thing. But another, a good and brave thing, is that healthy state into which any one is thrown, who just quietly and simply sits down and has a good, hearty, honest talk with himself upon the secret things of his own past being, and without bewildering and deluding himself with praise of what he calls his conscience and his fidelity, or depressing himself by feeling that he is in some hopeless case, contrasts the thing he is with the thing he ought to be. He will not faint, but summon

every energy and resolve that the future shall retrieve the past, that its very shortcomings and failure shall lift him into success.

As the poet says it, in the "Ladder of St. Augustine,"—

> "Nor deem the irrevocable Past
> As wholly wasted, wholly vain,
> If, rising on its wrecks, at last
> To something nobler we attain."

Secondly, we are not to faint. Though feeling faint, we are still to pursue. We speak of the stand-point of the present, but really there is no *stand*-point. "Without haste, without rest," — Goethe's words may well be the Christian's motto and the fact of the Christian's life. Time — the great, ceaseless, seething ocean flood between two eternities — does not rest; the flow of thought or of blood does not rest; life does not rest; God does not rest. How beautifully has some one said, "He gave his love no Sabbath rest"! Work is the divine element, essential to the divine life as to the human. The life which man draws from God, the life which is after his life, the life which is to bring him at one with God, is the life of ceaseless work,— pursuit. There is no rest to God, no moment of rest to any virtue or self-denial, no time when these can lay themselves down, no time when the man can say to them, "Sleep on now, and take your rest." The little darling, who all day long, with ceaseless prattle and restless feet, has been the thing of joy and beauty about your home, lays her dear head upon the pillow, and sweetly — is there any child music sweeter? — says,—

> "Now I lay me down to sleep,
> I pray the Lord my soul to keep."

But never a virtue, however faint, never a self-denial, however pure may utter the like; may rest and ask for God's blessing; for the moment of resting is the moment of desertion. Without rest, the life of virtue must be, as the life of the One all virtuous was. Faint that one was sometimes; for the multitudes followed him and were importunate and trifling, the disciples did not get into the kernel of his thought, and the cold Pharisee twitted, and the crafty Herodian spread a snare, and the hunt was up all through his tortured life to catch him in that thing which should bring him to the cross,—faint sometimes, for the devil pressed him sore in the wilderness, and the agony crushed him in the garden, and the pains and jeers bowed him at the cross, but no rest, pursuing still the great, fathomless mystery of his Father's will, daring to do and daring to die. Faint we shall sometimes be. There is the pressure of many a cross in this life's career; there is heat and burden in many a day; there are soft places of dalliance, tempting our drooping spirits, offering them shelter and their soothing, begging us to abide with them; and secret, importunate yearnings within joining their appeal, but they must not prevail. Without haste and without rest, faint, yet pursuing, steadily, boldly, persistently onward must our march be. The poet has rightly expressed it, when he speaks of our course as like "the pilgrim's, restless as the sun." In the present there is no rest. That is neither the portion of, nor potion for, the soul. If there be rest at all, if it be not utterly ruled out as incongruous to life, it lies in the beyond, is the end for which the present is the end-*less* struggle.

Thirdly, the one only hope for the soul lies in pursuit, pursuing, though faint. In the past no satisfaction, in the present no rest, where but in pursuing in the future is there any hope of attainment? It was over the Jordan that the prize for the weary and fainting warriors lay. Not with the bread of the men of Succoth and Penuel might they recruit themselves. The recruiting came after the victory. Not themselves they thought of, but the thing pursued. No ordinary men they; but just so forgetting of ourselves must we be, pursuing, whatever the temptation, whatever the drawback, whatever the infirmity,—pursuing, crowding, reaching, only to pursue and crowd on and on till the work is done and the great halt is called.

To-day, then, let us have no vain, chilling, killing regrets for the past, no sickly sighing or fainting in the present, but let us make a bold push into the future, with a wiser heart, a deeper faith, a dauntless courage, a soberer sense of duty, knowing no fatigue, no cajoling of circumstance or place, no pause, no rest, remembering that, however faint and however much things may tempt to rest here, the prize is on the other side of Jordan.

The last day of the year is one of our soul's epochs. We lay by one other portion of our being; and we lay it by sadly, because of its memories, because of its delinquencies. "It is no light thing to fold up and lay by forever a portion of one's life, even when it can be laid by with honor and in thankfulness." Happy those who can lay it by in honor, who feel that, however we may have fainted, we have still pursued. Let that give the new impulse and spur to the new year. Nor

let those of us to whom this happiness cannot come — alas! the many — stand dismayed, irresolute, faint, but get our spur and impulse out of our infidelities and the conviction that, though we may have fainted, there is still before us the way and the hope of pursuit.

Let our work with ourselves be threefold,— retrospection, introspection, circumspection,— the backward and inward look, the look around. To-day, a little pause for survey: to-morrow, the drum-beat for the new march. In that new march, forget not one thing. When the toils of his unscrupulous foes were winding thick about him, the friends of Lord Bacon warned him to look about him. His calm reply was, "I look above." Pursuing with the upward look, the way shall be, though rough and steep, the way to victory, to life, — the life in which all pursuing ends, into which no faintness enters.

Dec. 31, 1876.

XIII.

TOGETHER WITH GOD.

"Laborers together with God."— I. CORINTHIANS iii., 9.

WHAT Paul said of himself was a general truth. It was no exceptional condition of his as an apostle: it is every man's condition, it is everything's condition. Whatever has gone from God's hand has not only its own life, its own function, but this other higher quality of working with God. Nothing created but has that gift. As no man, so no thing liveth, dieth, to itself. God did not create and then separate from himself, make all things separate, disjointed, unrelated. He bound all things together, and kept all bound to himself. There is no *se*gregation anywhere: it is all *con*gregation, a community of interest, interdependence, affinities, sympathies everywhere, nothing isolated, alien, outcast, alone,— all things dependent on him, he dependent on all things. He might have left stars out, man out, flowers out; but, since they are made, he depends on them to discharge the ordained preaching, not of life alone, but of aid to him. Science makes out a correlation of forces. There is a more secret correlation running all through the things of God down to the lowest, back to the farthest, out to the minutest, and up to the grandest: in each and every is some pulse of him, the divine heart; in the divine heart, some an-

swering pulse to each. His life fed of man, man's life fed of him. He has locked all things together, bound them by a chain, and taking the two extremes brought them together and linked them as one indissolubly to his one central self. From him issues, to him proceeds. He keeps his hand grasp upon all. His inspiration is the life of all. Separate from him nothing is. Lay down systems of law, interpose series of causes, put God as far down the line as you may, he must ever stand at the bottom of it. He must ever be at the top of it, the cause and result, outgo and return. In him, all things meet. For him, all energies labor,—the seraph that adores and burns as the viewless and unseeing atom that lives only to expire. Not that there may be built up a huge divine selfishness, but that there may be unity, harmony, result everywhere, the whole development of the divine nature as the perfect culture of the human soul be reached.

No more inspiring, no more vital thought than this, one we ought resolutely to lift ourselves up to, one we ought not only to be willing, but glad to hold, one which we may grandly grow by. God's life does not centre and end in itself: no more does our life centre and end in ourselves. Nor do we put it to its highest use, when we serve our fellow-men or merely worship and obey some great spirit. Life is more. God aims not merely at establishing his own supremacy, carrying out his own thought, but, capable of high enjoyment, he desires to make others partake it. His joy is in work and the return of work. Instead of keeping it all to himself, he has given all things besides, not life merely, nor something to do merely, but

something to do for him, something to do in his work, given it to them to be of some help to him. So well as I can phrase it in my imperfect language, I think God has so arranged things, has so delegated powers, so resigned the power of doing things directly and solely himself, that he depends upon, has need of, the aid of all things he has created, to whom, at creation and so long as he continues their kind in being, he delegated certain powers. When there was that first grand mustering of created things, and under the divine fiat they were commissioned to increase and multiply, they were so many agents of his that he dismissed to "co-operative labor" not merely beasts, birds, fishes, reptiles, plants, and insects, men, but his servants, allies, things henceforth he was not to be able to do without, having their place and function in his vast economies. We talk of things material and animal, and shut them up to that class within which we define them; but the breath of the divine inspiration is upon all,— upon the stone that has for ages watched over the chance footprint of some antediluvian bird as upon man. After its kind, each and every has something to say or to do for him; to hold or transmit an assigned part in working out the great problem; a secret to hold mayhap till the time of revealing shall come. And as men go down into the deeps or up into the spaces, prying into the things hid, taking knowledge from the relaxing hand of God, it is not buried things that they expose, it is not distant things that they unveil, not unknown things they make known, but God's servants that they bring to light; and it comes to us grander than the Psalmist sang it, when he said, The

wings of the morning, or the uttermost parts of the sea, or the beds of hell, could not take him away from God; for we know they cannot take us out of the society of those things, which in their sphere, as we in ours, are his associates and co-workers, not only God everywhere, but everywhere the fellow-working thing, the thing helping out his idea, assisting in unfolding his plan and establishing his will.

By interlacing, not all creations only, but all of our own lives with his life, it is that we shall get to realize that he is not there and we here, with an infinite distance between. If, then, we add to that what it seems to me we cannot doubt, that we are ourselves essential parts of his success, that he has made himself to be dependent on our fidelity, we shall have an idea which many good men will call blasphemy, but which at once draws God up from the deeps and down from the spaces, and places him here with us, and places us by him, in one spirit, to work one work. Not an idea too vast is it, grand, impossible, but one to thrill the whole being, and put a new relish to life, as well as give new value to one's self.

Take to yourself the conviction that, over and beyond everything else that life is, it is a co-operative agency; that, put to its noblest use, it is capable of forwarding not human interests alone, but divine plans; that it is one link between creation and consummation, something God needs to the unfolding and harmony of his operations; that its infidelity, incompleteness, is a check, a bar, a hindrance to divine plans,—get such an idea firmly grappled in our consciences, a real, live, working influence, and what a change it would make

in life and in us! It would lift life out of the darkness in which human speculation has shaded it: it would lift the soul out of the lowness in which human selfishness has thrust it. We should indeed get what theologians have been so much afraid we should get,— what is an essential impulse toward all true development,— an idea of human dignity; and we should grow not so much afraid to sin as ashamed to sin, ashamed to be wayward and selfish, and indolent, wrapped up in and content with our own little to-day and to-morrow horizon. We should feel the incongruity between our base conduct and God's grand design for us. We should see the privilege to which he would lift us, as partners in his work,— not working out rewards for ourselves, but living and doing and suffering, so that the great purpose he has may be carried toward fulfilment. It would give us the feeling that he is building us, as lively stones, into the edifice it is the infinite purpose to erect, as the concluding and consummation of his great thought. And, more than all, we should realize the sublime unselfishness of God, who, rather than keep all power in his own hand, scattered it to many; instead of absorbing the happiness that comes of doing, made the many participants; took into partnership the various things he had created, gave them their several spheres and agencies, and crowned the faithful action of the thinking and feeling man with exactly the same pleasures and joys himself was conscious of. What an uplifting for us all, and what demand it makes of us, and how unmindful we are, and how unfaithful to the demand!

But it is our way, when any duty is pressed, to excuse

ourselves, to acknowledge a truth save as it includes ourselves. We are ready to say of those strange beings of whom we get rare glimpses in the sacred writings — angels — that they were fellow-workers with God. They came upon his mission, unfolded his will, they spoke his word, they discharged his errand, they instructed or they threatened men. And, whatever higher order of being in other and higher spheres there may be, they may well be laborers together with God, discharging somewhere the great obligations laid upon them. And so the men and women of great exceptional ability may be, whose lives have lent lustre to any age, or who have helped man forward, or any branch of useful knowledge or attainment. Of David, we say that he discerned not only that the heavens glittered with a mighty host, but they were working with God, expounding to man his glory; of Jesus, that he noticed not only the sparrow, but read the lesson of providence that its fall was made to teach. It was not a dead sparrow, but the means of a living lesson from the Infinite. And so we may make telescope or microscope, not discoverers so much as revealers, bring to us from faintest star-dust, from minutest sea-bottom shell, not the old refrain, "The hand that made us is divine," but the grander truth, "The hand that made allows us to attest him, and in our humbleness bear our part in the great developing of his purpose and his love." And this, too, we might get to believe: that the small, the mean, the trying, the dark in creation, or in affair, not only bear the image and superscription of the divine workman, but do something of the divine work. And yet we should continue to shrink from saying it of indi-

viduals. We plead insignificance, but insignificance is a word that God does not accept. He lets off nothing so. The God-helpers are not these alone. Many an agent we have hastily set down as hostile, rightly looked at, is on the side of God, working his work. A mistaken Christian zeal leads men to deny to the great minds, the great gropers of antiquity, that name. They are regarded rather as opponent, as antagonist, the men who could not see clearly as with a Christian vision, as blind, as derelict, as worthy reprobation, punishment. And yet few of God's more readily accredited agents have done more for him than men like Plato, Socrates, Seneca, Epictetus, men whom he could not do without. His fellow-laborers, men who got marvellous glimpses, especially they of the later Stoic school, of the best truths, have left wonderful record in word, if not so wholly satisfactory in life.

Xenophon could say of Socrates: "The man whose memoirs I have written was so pious that he undertook nothing without asking counsel of the gods; so just that he never did the smallest injury to any one, but rendered essential service to many; so temperate that he never preferred pleasure to virtue; and so wise that he was able, even in the most difficult cases, without advice, to judge what was expedient." He was speaking of one who, in his day, up to his light, was working God's work, as conscientiously and as acceptably as afterward, under far other illumining, it was worked by Christ himself.

Of death, Socrates said, "I derive confidence from the hope that something of man remains after death, and that the condition of good men will be much better

than that of the bad." Is not that as grand as the great after-word of Jesus, "Whoso liveth," etc.? Paul, under the same guiding, never said a grander thing at Athens than did his illustrious contemporary Seneca, under the guidance of that inner light which never wholly leaves any man: "God is near you, is with you, is within you. God comes to men; nay, what is nearer yet, he comes into men. No good mind is holy without God."

And, further back, when Elijah and Elisha were upholding the tottering of the Mosaic religion, blind old Homer along the shores of the Ægean was chanting from village to village his immortal verse, which gave to Greece not a poem only, but largely a religion. It was Bible to the Greeks, as the Pentateuch was to the Jews. He was as truly helping God as his great contemporaries, faithful to his light, leaving word and work, his insight and faith, a blessing to his nation and to all time. Running your eye down the long line of the past, it will not do to scout these early seekers after God, these early, half-educated laborers, to deny those twilight times, in which the uncertain glimmers of truth contended with great darkness, or forget how God leads the ages by slow and successive stages,—in every crude step, his will; and in every earnest actor, his fellow-workman. Did not Christ say, "Many shall come from the east and the west, and from the north and from the south, and sit down in the kingdom of heaven"? We may go farther. If it be true, as cannot well be denied, that

> "Blindly the wicked work
> The righteous will of God";

if most signal blessings to the race have been born out of the dark womb of the most dire adversity; if deepest laid plans of malice and hate and ill have only resulted in best things; if Alexander's sword only hewed a way for the coming gospel, its own empire perishing while the other struck its deep roots down into the heart of the ages; if American slavery established the gospel of liberty,— then must we say that the bad man or thing, in so far as its work results in good, the bad with no credit to itself is co-worker,— one in the great work, though not one in the initial purpose.

The reign of bloody Mary, the persecution of Torquemada and the butcheries of the Roman amphitheatre, siege of Londonderry and St. Bartholomew massacre, the resolved purpose of men who hated his good, have done for God's cause what no other agencies could have. The blood of the martyrs has long been believed to be the seed of the Church; and many a malign-visaged evil has been the disguised angel, working out good for him. The wrath of man not only praises, not only serves, but co-works with him.

We come back to ourselves. Who and what are we that we shall not do the same? Men and women to live through our more or less of the threescore years and ten as best we may, getting most out of them to ourselves,— merchants, artificers, soldiers, clergymen, wives, teachers, servants,— taken up with pursuits, with pleasures, with ambitions, exempt, insignificant, no part in this great work, not God helping? That does not describe us, express us, limit us: we are more and other. A something nobler are we. Let me be grandest monarch, greatest genius, achieve fullest suc-

cess, have any career: that does not define, express, exhaust me. I am, I have capacity for, I do something more. My chief work is beyond all these. I am what Paul said he was, what all these other things of God are. Nor star, nor under-world, nor thing that excites most curiosity, that rouses most awe, is what I am in this lower universe of God; the only created thing, capable, intelligently to itself, of spreading the divine name and glory; capable in other than a machine way of helping out the divine process, adding to the divine pleasure, returning somewhat of the Giver's gifts. Something has come to me that men call revelation, something that draws God out of the glorious, that draws me toward the glories, that shows me to myself, that enables me to understand another will and work in unison with another thought; that makes me understand the divine purpose, not only in creating things, but in creating me; that sets me apart and above as an interpreting, co-operating agency. I have something to do for the Power that makes for righteousness that is not myself.

By my pureness, I commend purity, and advance its rule; by my truthfulness, I proclaim the wealth and power of truth; by my fidelity, a great lesson in fidelity is taught. I work for God toward these issues. I bring my gift back. I am his helper in establishing them. Together with him, I build at the great fabric, indestructible as himself.

If we found a man untrue to a human trust, where would be the limit to our reprobation and scorn? To desert a trust, to leave a post, to betray a friend, nothing lower in our human catalogue. It marks the man

as with a scarlet letter. But here are we betraying a divine trust,— not earnestly, actively, with the best in us, forwarding the end for which we came into this scene; not helpers of God by the uttermost of our ability and our integrity. It is a very solemn thing to have that to do, but it is a far more solemn thing not to do it. Think of coming into the world, going through it and out of it, leaving undone, untouched, the most important thing of all,— the thing you, alone, of all created things, have the power to do! That is how it is. You do not hesitate to say that life is not for selfish uses : you really know that God expects you to help him, to make return, and that his things must be left undone or wait unless you do.

There are great and little things in charity, in influence, there are great and little services among friends and in daily intercourse, toward high and low and equal, and all the culture of your own spirit, that it may take on the qualities of Jesus. These ought not to be neglected, ought not to be postponed. Everywhere are men and things, institutions and pursuits, awaiting you,— your voice, your arm, your influence. Not the truth, not the church, not great outside things alone, look for you, cry out for you. Life, daily life, the life you lead, life just around you, is the sphere in which you are wanted, and wanted not to do the things of daily life alone, to carry into them a God spirit, and spread through them God's influence.

I do not think it will hurt us to come to understand what we actually are and what we are actually set to do. What we do greatly want is to hallow life, to get into it all facts and belongings that can tie us back to

an Infinite Being, so that our whole being shall be influenced by and in the service of Him from whom we spring, to whom we tend. And hallowing life does not take it among unjoyous things, does not strow it thick with penance and with gloom, does not sour and sadden. It may sober; and does not life need sobering? But you can see that to none has life so quick, so keen, so lasting relish as to those who are God's sons and daughters, who take into daily duty and make part of daily intercourse the thought of him. I have heard it from many lips,— not as a boast, but slipping out unconsciously,— such words as show me how many lives are glad and beautiful,— are glad and beautiful, not because of the outer circumstance, but because of the inner devotedness, without pomp, without profession, silently, always doing what it seemed that God asked, learning of him, teaching for him. It were a wholesome thing would we all hallow life that way, feel that no humble thing of ours is lost to him, that we are workers in his work, though we being only doers, forget something of our own enjoyment and realize something of the real end and aim of being.

Were each of us to begin the day, remembering that God looked to us to help him by word and duty in it, did we keep the thought near us of our high calling, I do not believe it would dash the zest of life's true flavor at all. It would only give higher relish, not the relish that the sense finds, too evanescent to be described when it drains its cup, but the high flavor that stands by the spirit when it has done its work well.

Jan. 11, 1874.

XIV.

OIL AND WINE.

"Oil and wine."—LUKE x., 34.

THESE were the simple medicaments of a rude age and an uncultivated people. Medicine was not a science, but rather a tradition, as in many of our country families yet. A few simples, suggestions of nature or experience, kept near by everybody; matters of every day, that was all. No apothecaries, labels, and recipes; no blunders of clerks or experiments of half-knowing men, no rivalries of schools, no quacks.

Oil and wine! Everybody had them; everybody knew all about them; every one could handle them. It was just as if we were to have roots and leaves and shrubs from the wayside. The vine and the olive were the commonest things; and God stores not great secrets only, but great blessings, within the simplest, nearest, and most common things, just as he does great duties. The hillside in the time of the vintage stood garnished in purple, more regal than Solomon's, and all along the ways the olive shed her fruit.

The Samaritan of the parable was not a physician, only a traveller. Oil and wine were part of his necessary equipment. The priest and Levite, no doubt, had the like, though the trip from Jerusalem to Jericho was a short one. Oil and wine entered so much into daily

necessity that they would not be likely to be without them; indeed, as public servants, ought to have had them. But, then, priests and Levites were badly demoralized in those days. They were the counterfeits of the original, men who went on the other side of morality and religion as of humanity,—not men to come up to the square of duty and ease other men's burdens, but men to bind on more, and bind them so that the knot should not slip nor the burden drop. Terrible fellows they were, when you consider their profession and their opportunity.

The Samaritan was a different kind of man. The priest and Levite put him into a very bad place in this world and the next. They would not deal with him, and salvation was only for the Jews. For all that, a very good sort of man; and he had what the priest and Levite had not,—a heart, and that in the right place. He found a man lying beaten and bleeding in the road. It did not matter that he was a Jew, who would not have given him a glass of water for his thirst. He did not see the Jew, but the sufferer, not the enemy, but the man, nor the man so much as his need. He did not stoop over him and feel a little pity, and then resume his journey: he did not leave him and go for a physician, or report his case to some charitable society when he got to Jericho; but he stopped, got off his beast, took the case in hand, bound up the wound, pouring in oil and wine, and did all the rest which you so well know in the simple narrative, that has handed an accursed Samaritan to an immortality of honor, to grow more honored as the ages come to get at the pith of a lesson they have as yet only distantly admired,

and has made the name of priest and Levite a synonyme forever of all that is selfish and narrow, mean and unsympathizing.

Oil and wine,—comfort and strength. Are not these the two common, cheap things we may all have and all may carry and all may give? Are they not the two ministrants all suffering, misfortune, weakness need,—in them all that man can do for man,—and is not he who neglects them, refuses them, passes by on the other side, a priest and a Levite? And to be priest and Levite after the parable's showing,—what is it but to have as low a place as any Christ has put any man in?

The make of our souls is very analogous to that of our bodies, at least our thought and language so have it; and much the same process must be gone through with in our moral ails, as in our physical. The wounded body lying there in the road needed just this exact treatment and this exact sequence of treatment, oil to soothe, wine to strengthen, soothing first, strengthening after. Just this, the need to our human suffering and our inward ails, weaknesses, bruises, wounds, not merely oil, comfort, not merely wine, strength, but comfort before the strength, so that the strengthening may really strengthen after. He mistakes who reverses the order or omits either. There is a curious inversion of natural laws sometimes, a process of which God is never guilty, and yet which man thinks to do with impunity. There is an almost brutality in the way in which some men approach, the manner in which they deal with, the sufferings, wants, necessities, mistakes of others. The comfort is

omitted, not in unkindness always, but through ignorance, want of thought, or appreciation. Here is a man in misfortune, no matter how, by whose fault, or because of what circumstance, in a condition that compels the seeking for aid. What he needs first is the oil, comfort; what you would need in his place, what you would always give, did you remember that so much neglected duty, the Golden Rule. He does not find it. The human heart to which he appeals does not turn back to study and understand his position, and give the cheer of an honest sympathy, always so far beyond the dole of charity. Sharp scrutiny, a something almost querulous in tone, not a wholly covered-up suspicion, a thinly disguised blame, advice not over-well considered, at best the bracing of a tonic at exactly the time when the innermost craving is for that one comforting drop of which so large a portion of the human family seems to run dry. Tonics are well; but the system must be prepared for them, not shocked by them.

In cases of affliction among friends and equals, even in the professional treatment of clergy, you find the same thing, the poor, wounded, bleeding spirit not gathered close, held and soothed, shielded and comforted, not the oil of considerate sympathy poured upon its writhing, that kind of "Peace, be still," that Jesus used, not only to billows, but to souls. Instead, men are exhorted to patience, to faith, to duties,— "You must not give up," "You must be brave," "You must look to Christ," "You must trust God." Your tears and your doubts and your temptings to murmur are desperately wicked: you must master yourself. All

these very well, very strengthening, imperative, in right time and place, by and by. The soul has got to rally itself, accept, bear, do; but it is first entitled to something other. It cannot bear wine, it must have oil. It is a fine thing in friendship, says MacDonald, to know "when to be silent." So of comfort. It is the circling arm of love and help, encouraging, cheering, sympathizing, even "bearing with," the support of tender consideration that must come first, oil, before one can stand alone, or bear the tonic ministrant, the wine of mingled faith and duty. I always feel that the larger part of what goes by the name of consolation, and is the expected formula of occasion, is a cruelty and an insult, it so overlooks the comforting.

Job's friends were wise. They were comforters first. They sat by his side in the ashes through the dull days, silent, let nature have her way. It is a picture of exquisite wisdom and pathos that comes to us out of that remote and barbaric past, as every soul that has suffered recognizes,— that patient group sustaining with the mute eloquence of their presence, till the time seemed come when they should begin to strengthen, add the wine of advice and conviction, even of upbraiding, to the oil of compassion. Our sympathy too much omits tenderness. It omits waiting. It puts aside nature. In our most sympathetic moods, too much of hardness, impatience, and abruptness.

We jump to the end which we feel advisable, inevitable, and ignore intermediate necessity. We would strengthen, but forget to comfort. We do not realize that in trouble the most manly, self-centred man becomes in his mood and in his wants essentially femi-

nine, yea, more than that, more womanly than woman; and that the one element he cannot then do without — the comforting — none can do without.

If we are to bear, to have the benefit of the wine, we must have had the preparative of oil. In your garden, the bruised tendril must first be bound, the wasting sap stayed, the wound cicatrized before you may bind it back against its support, and coax and stimulate it to growth, and expect of it fruit; and with the bruised spirit it is not otherwise.

Equally true is this with children in a task, a duty, or in sickness. We are abrupt with them, imperative. Homes sin this way; and here is the cruelty of schools, which give no sympathy to perplexity, only command, which will not kindly, patiently, tide over difficulties, but take wilful indifference for granted. So, between its two greatest helps, childhood is apt to get no fair play,— wine, but not oil.

Equally true is it again with men and women who have a habit to break, a character to reform, an inward work to do, a new life they desire to lead. We forget the comforting part, the encouraging of hand or look and tone; the atmosphere of sympathy we may manage to carry with us, and, *if* we carry, others inevitably feel. We forget how much "standing-by" one, in his new and weak efforts, may do for him: we overlook the little tender, delicate thoughtfulnesses, invaluable always, inestimable now,— the oil, which shall take him over the early weakness and hold him until strong enough to be thrown wholly upon himself. We go to work with the wine. We advise; we lay down law; we use, if not threat, warning; we call out and apply

the things of the severer aspect. We crowd the new purpose-impressed heart. We expect it to stand alone and to stand erect. Not the genial aid of sympathy, but the outright demand of duty,—just as kind and wise as it would be to take the child, toddling along by its mother's finger, and demand it to keep its poise upon the trapeze. Oil first, by and by wine; leading, and then standing alone; coaxing, and then demand; that which comforts, and afterward that which strengthens. Look for growths, healings in others; in yourself, by the one nature law which soothes before it asks for strength. In yourself, I say, because just this truth needs to be applied to the self. I do not care how severely unreasonable others may be with us, a man of any moral sensitiveness is more severely unreasonable with himself. The most unnatural, depressing thing in life is the self-judging of which we every day do so much. *Self*-unreasonableness is worse for us than that of others. In the great contritions that come to every man, in the moments of self-loathing and despair, when a man stands culprit before his own soul, it is the self treatment which is so much harder than any we get, which does so much more harm.

What indignation, what wrath, what hard names, what despair, to send us sullen and hopeless at life's tasks again! It is not this we want, this that is healthy, this that will do good, but comfort, soothing, rest before upbraiding, some self-tenderness and reason, oil and then wine. And so no cursing the day of one's birth, as with David and Job, no despair, no morbid gloom, no descending depravity, no suicide, but hope and courage, fidelity and life

As I look at it, in our treatment of others, we a good deal divide ourselves into two separate classes of helpers,—the oil-carriers and the wine-carriers. Perhaps I should more exactly say that constitution and religious faith divide us.

Especially among women are there two distinct classes. I used to see them in the army hospitals, and I find them in life. One is the gentle, delicate, cosseting kind; eyes, ears, heart all sympathy, cooing and wooing, running the whole self out, exhausting it in the overflowing intensity of feeling; a class emotionally sensitive and self-forgetful, whose cruse of oil, like the widow's, never fails, though it be poured never so unsparingly and to never so many unworthy. These are saints and heroines of daily life, working out the great law of sacrifice, and filling too many graves with weary and worn-out bodies, giving too much and getting too little, and apt to leave their patients weakly leaning upon them rather than pushing for strength of their own, not asking for wine, content with oil.

The other is the class of strong and self-sustained, not encumbered with nerves or burdened by sentiment, good-hearted, well-meaning, but rough and blunt, stern in faith, fixed in feature, sharp in tone, pronounced in manner, angular in ideas of life, forbidding angels, like many a nurse in infirmary or hospital; wine-carriers, who are always expecting men to take up their beds and walk; who have no patience with the pain and weakness to which they minister, and will do every conceivable thing you can desire, done in the uttermost spirit of duty, all the while with a sort of ill-disguised feeling of contempt, as if you were a

half kind of impostor or needlessly complaining. A sort of cast-iron people themselves, they expect everybody else to be that. They would stimulate every one up to their own point of bustling activity and courage and endurance. Each of these has hold of half a truth, the half they get in their constitution or from their religion. Each will thus do only half the good.

We are always needing, not perhaps to correct nature, but to complement her halfness,— add by thought and culture the thing she omits. The oil-bearer must become wine-bearer also. The wine flagon on the one shoulder must be balanced by the oil jar on the other. Into the wound you pour the one, you must not fail to pour the other. The decision of strong minds must be tempered by the gentleness of tender ones. Mary must not complain of, but must supplement, Martha. So we get the surest tenderness and the safest strength. The really nutritious characters of biography, history, and our own experience, have this blending. Exquisitely did these qualities blend in Jesus. What he portrayed of the Samaritan as doing, he himself always did. It is that which gave him so much power with the men of his own time, which makes him the bright ideal for us, that which will keep his hold on the love and reverence of men.

Among all the teachers, he alone comes with oil and wine. He alone understands and ministers to the twofold need in man ; and when creeds and theologies, catechisms and prayer-books and forms shall fail, when the Christ men have portrayed is found not to be the gospel Christ, when all this claim for other teachers equal in

authority shall fade away, and the truths taught in his name are owned not to be gospel truths, then, in the chaos and confusion, within the vortex of which we are already entered, that one whom we can image out of those Gospels as the *Christus Consolator* and the *Christus Imperator* — Christ the Comforter, Christ the Ruler, strengthener — will be the Christ about whom men will rally, on whom they will believe, not the Christ of hard and cold defining, but the Christ of warm, loving, and encouraging heart.

As in individuals, so in sects, this halfness of Christian action is evident. Some of the sects are comforters, seeking the soothing, elevating, spiritual things, looking for the smile on the Father's face, believing utterly in his love, and perhaps taking something of robustness from that love in the intensity of their desire to shut off the thought of that hard God men have so largely made the Divine Being to be. They find man bruised, wounded, left half-dead by the wayside, sore and helpless; and they pour in oil. They make him feel of sin, shame, and transgression, what the prodigal came to feel: that these have established a wide distance between him and the deserted home, but not an irremediable breach; that he has a simple work to do, earnest, hard, and long, but sure in the reward it brings to his fidelity. The Father's face and arms and kiss are before him, and comforted he begins and goes on his returning way. Other sects forget the oil. Man is worthless, a ruined nature, a corrupt worm, incapable of good. God is a king, a despot, not a friend and Jehovah. He can only forgive when the innocent Christ has taken upon himself the sins of the world and expi-

ated them upon a cross. The sinner, every man, stands stark before himself, alone, comfortless. He is appealed to without tenderness, he is driven by the hot tornado impulse of damnation to accept a dogma of belief. He clutches at this mill-stone as the buoy of his salvation. He is spurred, stimulated, by the dogging fears ever behind him like implacable fates. He is under the ministry of wine. The genial glow, the genial comfort, the genial hopes of the gospel of comfort are sins and delusions. In the stern, relentless gospel of strength alone is safety.

The teaching and the belief of the Church has always vacillated between the oil and wine: it has not been the blended.

When the two creeds get too tyrannical and the faiths too narrow, then there is a rush from the side of strength over to that of comfort. The Puritan faith had no oil in it. It gave the wounded only wine, and the wine was the harsh wine of the earlier fermentation. The reactionary time has come. Men are demanding oil. The Fatherhood of God is taking the place of the tyranny of God; the ability of man dispossesses the idea of his inability; the old, raw, mercantile idea of atonement, equivalent, expiation, everywhere has broken down. Men cling to old shadows of great names, and claim great power in the things out of which they know the vitality has gone. The sects stand and seem to grow; but the old sect spirit is dead, and a new life, broader, healthier, is springing within the dead bones. In every one,— it is in Judaism and Mohammedanism as well,— it is the liberal, "unchristian," progressive part that only has life.

The great popular churches no longer demand subscription to the long-time and published tenets of their creed, but ease the way to converts by letting down the barriers. I know whereof I affirm in the Episcopal, Presbyterian, Methodist, and even Romish Church. The rigid ideas of the past cannot stand against the liberal spirit of the present, which has no fear of hierarchies, no reverence for mere antiquity, no bended knee for old Shibboleth, but dares put its destroying hand upon the things of the Church as upon things of government and society, destroying that it may build broader and better; getting the Christ of tradition and of men's mistake out of the way, that we may have the Christ indeed, the pure and loving spirit who came with oil and wine to sorrowing and sin-sick, that they might have the peace of God, the joy, hope, rest, of living through him with God. Men are calling that spirit they cannot stem, which ruthlessly treads out false things as the ox treads out the kernels of wheat, hard names, and saying bitter and untrue things of its action and purpose. That is the kind of opposition every advance of thought must consent to meet. That is the way men think to rescue a desperate cause. But, just as plainly as to Belshazzar's frightened gaze there stood out on the walls of his palace the fatal doom, so over and above the narrow dogma and creeds of popular sects is written, "Weighed in the balance, and found wanting"; while the liberal spirit in church, literature, science, pioneers the way to the new time when the gospel, neither oil nor wine, but oil and wine, neither comfort nor strength, but comfort and strength, shall receive its new baptism and start anew on its purifying career.

And is not this what we all want? Not that our sect mistakes and limitations shall prevail, but that the vast truth of God shall make its way and be glorified, purging, as it goes, all dross, driving all shadow, that we may have at last on earth not the church triumphant, not *my* church triumphant, but Christ triumphant?

As I would not tell time by the hither or further reach of the pendulum, but rather by that record on the dial face which results from the combined action of the two extremes, so would I not gauge the gospel by its either teaching, but by the combining of the two. What Robertson used to say, "That truth is not the way between opposites, but the combining of opposites, not a way which has nothing of either, but a way which has something of both," is true here.

Our gospel is not merely comfort. When it has comforted, it adds strength. Christ comforted that he might strengthen; said, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," then, "Take up thy bed and walk"; paused at the supper table for comfort, then passed to the garden for strength; comforted his friends by what he said, that they might get strength by what he did.

See how true that is. Listen to those words so strangely winning and soothing, yet with which he opens his last talk,—"Let not your hearts be troubled"; and then, when he has soothed, comforted, prepared, mark how he gradually assumes the higher tone, and feel your own pulse beat the quicker, and realize how reassuring the language was, and how the drooping heads were lifted and the depressed spirits strengthened, as his voice rises from its low, sweet soothing to confidence and triumph.

From his lips and his life, the gospel starts upon its great mission, surcharged with his spirit, to bear its oil and wine to all waiting and needy hearts. Never are they raised and set upon their upward journey until they have felt the twofold ministry. To the kingdoms of the earth and to the isles of the sea, to the generations of man, to the sects of the Church, to the life of the soul, it goes, a very Samaritan with its comforting and strength men's mistakes and follies have not been able wholly to overlay. Wonderfully has that gospel, not yet justly apprehended by any sect,— wonderfully, when you know its history,— prevailed in the world for men's good. It has another and a brighter day before it, when its real spirit shall become manifest, when its twofold work shall be done everywhere and upon all; when the oil and the wine, equally ministering to human need, shall raise the spirit to light and life, shall be the balm and the healing to all wounds, the strength and support to all souls.

XV.

LIFE AND IMMORTALITY.

"Jesus Christ who has brought life and immortality to light."— II. Timothy i., 10.

Did it ever occur to you in reading the sacred history, a certain deliberateness and uniformity of the divine method? Our familiar household word is that "history ever repeats itself." A greater than history does that. God repeats himself in the greater as the less, in epochs as in days, in operations of nature, in event with nation and discipline with individual. We who are ashamed to repeat ourselves, lest we should not be original, lest we betray limit, might take courage and lesson of him, who repeats himself in every day, with every night,— repeats himself in seasons, in movements of systems, in recurrence of event, so that things sometimes seem to circle about a centre rather than advance from a point. It seems to have been his policy to precede every great act by an annunciation of it, to have sent nothing without its herald, its forerunner, to have done nothing without preceding proclamation.

The Scriptures give us many striking, startling annunciations,— words from outside our ordinary range of utterance, truths above our ordinary level and foreshadowing the divine purpose, and brought to us in

an exceptional way. God, who in his silence, is even more marvellous and mysterious than his utterances, sometimes breaks through that reserve, and helps the ages on by some new approach, some fresh appeal; but, before he does it, he announces that which he is about to do. To Abraham, it is announced what he and his are to be; to Moses, the burning bush makes proclamation; the birth of John as of Jesus is announced. Annunciations seem to have accompanied all the great events of Scripture. They are among the invisible ties which bind the great acts of earth back to the heavens whence they came and to which they lead.

Those which most arrest our attention, the most graphic, the most scenic, the most impressive, are the annunciation at Bethlehem of the birth of Jesus, and the annunciation at the grave of the rising of Jesus, the birth into the mortal and the birth into the immortal life. They are both made by angels, and are both incidents which heighten the impressiveness of facts over which they, at the same time, throw a deep veil of mystery. The two scenes, each after its kind and purpose, are perfect, and, were they to be rejected as historically false, must be admitted to be wonderfully imagined, such as grandly, significantly, meet the demand of such occasion.

In the text there are two things stated to have been done by Jesus. As they lie there, side by side, they seem to have an equal emphasis, equally would he have emphasized them. But the Christian tendency has been to put the stress upon the one rather than the other; and we seem better satisfied to consider Jesus as the revealer of the mysteries of the life to be than

revealer of the mysteries of the life that is, to follow him in the belief in that life than the living out of this. Something of this natural to those before whom ever lies a fascinating, perplexing, awful mystery, and something of it inevitable from the prevalent tone of the writings and speeches of the immediate followers of Jesus, and the exigencies of their position. No sooner is he risen from the dead than that fact is seized as the new key to the new religion. John had preached repentance, Jesus reformation, Paul the resurrection. The Christianity which took its symbol of the cross from him has caught also the emphasis which he gave the future life; and unconsciously our gospel instruction and our gospel hope are based rather upon an immortality brought to light than a life brought to light. Peter began by preaching that. Paul's one text was the resurrection. Of that was he the witness, for that was he in jeopardy. Whatever he said started from that or ended in that. It was the thing never out of his thought in all labors, journeys, dangers. He made it the corner of his building. It was his one conviction. He was a man of the one idea. The fierce impulse of his ardent nature passed it to the front, and kept it there. Jesus had said really very little about the future. The impulse of his nature had been turned to another theme. Could he bring life to light, raise men from the graves in which they had buried themselves, could he get them to follow him here, they must perforce follow him into the hereafter. If they would not rise from their self-dug graves now, they must come to tribulation and anguish. He states the fact and leaves it, and pretty much all he says about the future is in

regard to his own personal views. When Paul came to be the master spirit, when he moved against the stronghold of Gentile and Jewish disbelief, he pressed the doctrine of the resurrection. Not life so much as immortality; for it was just then the absorbing thing with him and his disciples. The intensest of beliefs with them was the belief of the immediate coming again of Jesus, and except one bears that in mind he has no true solution of the apostolic attitude, his orations and epistles. Hegesias, a philosopher of Alexandria, taught the miseries of life and the blessedness of death, till suicides became so frequent that he was stopped.

The expectation and intense waiting and longing were of the at once reappearing, second coming of Christ, before that generation passed. It might be any day, it might be any hour; and the sooner, the better. Paul believed it with all the intense ardor of his intense nature. It was the prompting spirit of all he believed, hoped, said, wrote, did. It guided, moulded, colored everything. Not so intensely and surely did the Jews believe in the coming of the Messiah as did Christ's personal friends and closest followers believe in his immediate coming to carry out, in literal exactness, the scenic display of the judgment. Remember this as you read Paul, but remember also that he was — as he called himself — an earthen vessel, and that earthen vessels failed to detain the subtlest aroma of the greatest truth he was appointed to teach.

What we have seen feebly, from time to time, in the limited and absurd preparation of Millerites and Second Adventists, what was the universal stir and conviction

as the tenth century closed, was still more intensely and unanimously that belief which pressed itself without shadow of doubt upon the members of the new church. The end of the world, the catching up of these into the heavens who should not see death, the passing of earth, the coming of angels and of the end in that generation, the expectancy of immortality, crowded back into eclipse the value, the duty, the desirability of life. The time was so near that there was not time for them to get life: they must do what best they could, and be ready for the end.

The coming of Jesus has been the bringing the "life to light," the showing, the teaching what life is, the giving men something to do. Men did not know how to live before, in no high sense did they live. What we get as life among all the nations, the Jews as the most favored and religious, the Greeks as most cultivated, the Romans as holding the loftier and sterner virtues, was not life at all in the sense in which Jesus meant it, lived it. It was not at all the type of that which he divulged, and which man, amid the baffling of ages since, has sought to realize and impress as life.

Jesus saw that, if he was to do anything for man, in the order of sequence, he must first show him the value and the method of life. He might proclaim, assure, immortality; but the condition of any worth in it lay in the habit and character of the present. He felt that not death so much as life lay within the region of shadow; that it needed to be taken out of that shadow before any immortality could be worth having. That gift, assurance, had been nothing without the other, the mere perpetuating of the shadow, not removing

it, the prolonging of a low-toned existence, not the building it up into a glory. We have a good many characters which on the historic page have outlived the chance and change of time, but neither in the two marvellous collections of biography, the Old Testament and Plutarch, nor in any section of history of any age or people, do we read of such characters as begin to grow common and to adorn the common way of common lives, the moment Jesus has brought life to light.

I think it well on Easter morning not to think only of the Easter revelation, the resurrection from the tomb, but the prior resurrection from the grave of trespasses and sins, without which, the first resurrection by and through our own efforts, no rising out of a tomb, the effort of God, will do any good.

Henry Vaughan, a quaint poet of the seventeenth century, says :—

> "Awake! awake!
> And in his resurrection partake,
> Who on this day, that thou mightest rise as he,
> Rose up, and cancelled two deaths due to thee,"

meaning the death of the body in its tomb and the death of the soul in its. The latter only really concerns us. What we have to do is to live, to break the bondage and cere-cloth of evil, to come forth from the corruptions we seek, love, submit to, and walk in that newness of life which shall ripen into immortality by its own law, as the blossom of the tree ripens into fruit by its own law.

For a long time, we have been taught there was no belief in immortality among the heathen peoples, and there was none that satisfies our new Christian condi-

tions. But all people have had a belief in a future of some kind, and the revelation that Jesus brought was rather a revelation of the kind of future than the fact of future. No unimportant part of the mythologies, the poems of Greece and Rome, and the thoughts of philosophers, was taken up with the future.

There was belief in it, in some cases belief enough to modify the act of the present life, belief enough, in the case of the Egyptians, to make the present little and the future much. They had become more anxious about their tombs than they were about their dwellings, and their interest in the things beyond eclipsed and cooled their interest in things this side.

I really think that men needed to have life brought to light rather than immortality: they thought less about it, did less for it. For what was life at that time, what had life been? Could anything be more low, more hopeless, more degrading, not only among its average peoples, but among its better, its representative men? Do we really get at life in its any expression, except in the very rarest instances, that any way betrays a knowledge or appreciation of great duties and possible growths, or a conception of it as an inward being rather than an outward growth? The very idea of life was in the dark. The corruption that reeked and festered history everywhere hints at, but does not unveil. The world was dead in trespasses and sins. It was one drear charnel-house; and all the natural trapping of society, and all the apparent solidity of empire, and all the elegance and culture and luxury of here and there, this and the other, were but the thin veil drawn over the body of a death whose ghastly hor-

rors were suggested by the very magnificence of the shroud enclosing them. Life was dead. There was no moral man,—more than that, there was no spiritual man; no lofty, unselfish devotion, aspiration, no generous self-abnegation; no desire to press beyond the satisfaction of the day; nothing of that which to-day makes the better life of civilization, the life of our imperfect Christianity. Life needed to be brought to light, and a resurrection of man not so much from the grave as from the death of sin. Not to show men how to die, and take the shadows from death, but to show men how to live, and to take the shadows from life, Christ's mission.

The soul was obscured as to itself. Men were not conscious of its quality. Sense, taste, power, intellect, they were conscious of; but of a something whose range was other than these, something which, interpenetrating these, should lift and transfigure these, should take the whole being out of their range, and mould it into grace and power beyond highest philosophic dreaming, making the average of ordinary life high over what the highest range of it had, at any time, been among any people,—they did not grasp that grandest conception of the Infinite, which it was left to Jesus to voice, which brought him out of silent and immense distances, and made him to be, whatever of power he might be in far away spaces; to be a dweller in human hearts, loving them and asking to be loved; One whom, in the poverty of our human conception, we call our Father, but whose Infinite Self as much transcends our highest thought of that relation as his Infinitude surpasses the little life of the most ephem-

eral of his creations. They did not grasp those higher obligations and duties of man to man, which we group under the ruling of the Second Commandment; all those better sympathies and charities which have added so much to the value and wealth of life; which are the correctives of selfishness; which show how we all become our brothers' keepers, and force us not merely to do the good that offers, but to go out of our way to find and do it. I think that we may somewhat state it thus: that, before Christ, the human heart was prompted to say, "Be ye warmed and filled," but since Christ the Christianly heart seeks to warm and fill, and the well-wisher is become the well-doer. These things are what Jesus specially added to the best thought and effort of his time; bringing life to light, revealing what lay behind gross darkness, and showing to man the boundlessness of the application of his principles, the moment the scales drop from the long-sealed eyes, and the heart becomes warm and responsive under the vision.

I think that we must remember that Jesus never stopped to prove the existence of God or the fact of immortality, that he took these from the first and all along as not to be questioned, as living stones to build upon, but that he did spend his life proving what was to be the excellence of life, what was the sweetness and joy of earnest, humble endeavor, and how, though thorn crowns rewarded, and crosses pressed, and jeers followed, and hates abounded, and every manner of loss and tribulation grew, these made a life in the soul; made a life out in the every-day world so refined, so full of hope, so rich in trust, that the things they

added were in superabundant measure, of more excellent worth than the things they took away. His whole life, sermon, parable, precept, act,—the mere miracle that healed the body, the more kindly miracle that reassured the soul,—were the abounding and elaborate proofs by which he strove to win men away from the low, narrow, degraded thing they esteemed life to be. The stress of his effort was to throw light upon life; and what he said of immortality—though we have been used to putting it the other way—was auxiliary, I had almost said subsidiary, to it. What he said was, Repent, reform; make your life right; love God; serve one another; watch your hearts and all their outgoes; do as you see I am doing; make life as you go, day by day, and it will grow into, make that eternal life, which is clothed upon with immortality here and now. As a fact, now and then, to quicken his disciples, he spoke of rising from the grave; but, as a duty, he perpetually pressed it upon them to lift themselves out of the grave of sin,—not to put stress upon a future rising into some other existence, but to put stress upon the present abandonment of whatever makes a shame or a regret, rising into new life here. To the inherent immortality of the soul, from which nothing can separate it, to which it is heir by virtue of its parentage and birth from God, Jesus added the immortality that can only be shared by those who have known his life, by faith and work have grown into that abounding life which he came to proclaim; who have put into their grave the trespasses and sins which had deformed them, and have grown through the might of the Divine Spirit into the proportion and hope of the pure and the true. To live and

move and have one's being within the sphere in which Christ lived, and to be led by the same hand, trained by the same discipline, to feel the pulses of the same hope, to be encouraged, cheered by the same love, to share a life which lifts man out of the downward tendency in one part of his nature into the divine life for which it yearns, is to know and to participate in that one thing, LIFE, which made Christ supreme, head over all things.

As I regard it, there is a great deal of unhealthy sentimentality about immortality, a very great deal that is purely false and harmful. In itself, it is a solemn and sublime reality; and the veil which has been hung between the present and the future never has been rent. Where God chose silence and secrecy, man has been busy with ingenious curiosity, and has piled about, encumbered, overlaid the fact by the ten thousand times ten thousand incongruities of his hope or his fear. The saddest and dreariest of all literature is that in which, whether Calvinist, Swedenborgian, Spiritualist, Universalist, Romanist, prose or poetry, attempt is made to set up some peculiar say-so about the future. Resignation, hope, faith, cheer, these are not only beautiful, but well; but whatsoever is more cometh of ignorance, and doeth evil. Specially vicious are the hymns put into the hands of our children, and offered for the use of ourselves, and that rhetoric of what we call our more spiritual sermons. They are unhealthy and wrong, and do more to excite a morbid, sickly sentiment than to quicken the pulses of vigorous life. We are prone enough to prefer dwelling in the atmosphere of sentiment rather than under the more

bracing influences of duty and principle. Duty and principle become so distasteful because we have made to ourselves a more congenial thing of the vague and misty atmosphere of sentiment. Sentiment is the enervating air of a sunny South; principle, the bracing tonic of a sturdy North. Our religion is always running away from the one, and running into the other, when it should be the just and happy mingling of the two. Whatever of a sort of ecstacy or emotion may be got out of the larger part of the literature of immortality, a just and real and abiding happiness, a thing to stand all tests, cannot be had. Our faith is not content to be healthy and manly and real, reticent in its expressions; but it runs to vague rhapsodies, vain and fictitious aspirations and longings, diffusing a tone whose mischief-making we do not realize, because we shrink from the rugged, unexplained fact, and seek comfort and soothing from whatever will undertake to clothe it for us. We do not mind it that there is an uncouth rock, ragged and shabby, in the midst of our well-trimmed lawn, if we can manage it that living vines shall throw over it the vesture of their freshness, and we do not mind it so much that there is this mystery in life, if so be somebody garnish it with the leaves and flowers of his devising. But the rock is beneath the vine, just the same, uncouth, ragged, shabby; and the mystery is there, just as appalling, whatever poetry, rhetoric, imagination, desire, may have combined to conceal it beneath their declarations. In nothing does our religion more need the strong, unsparing hand, that shall strip it of a deal of present and acceptable nothingness, the tinsel so many count

as gold, and the substitution of strong principle and faith for sounding, unsubstantial words used without real thought or meaning. I do not believe that the large part of preaching or talking upon the future life, the retail and detail which goes as the stereotype of sympathy, and true, spiritual condition, elevates or comforts or in any way helps the man into the great divine and relying faith. The only thing that really does that is life, the life Jesus brought to light, brought up out of many graves and long deaths. Put into life, daily and common life, the exquisite proportion and graces of the Christian; fill every day with hope and prayer and effort,— Gospel-based; let the thought be not of satisfying self, but of attaining excellence; let life be a real and hearty and honest living, full of warm impulses and actual growths and great yearnings, and you will unconsciously be growing into the life eternal, which is the hither part of the life immortal. Living rightly, you cannot help fitting for whatever immortality may be, and you no more need the evanescent helps of a literal construction of the dramatic words of Jesus, Paul, or the Book of Revelations, or whatever in any time, in any way, by whatever sanction, has been drawn from them, than the forest monarch, rooted by centuries and by storms, needs a trellis for its trunk and garlands for its branches.

However grand the truth of the soul's immortality, and whatever the value of the gospel on that point, I prize beyond all other things the fact that the gospel tells me how to live to-day; that it has brought into light this life; that it lays its stress upon being alive

now; that it teaches us that we are not to seek first and most the resurrection which comes as the eternal gift of the Infinite Father, but the resurrection which is our own work, which, if we do not first see to, any amount of resurrections, at the judgment days, will not help us.

The Easter suns still rise and set, and the earth stands and the heavens remain. In the same uniform routine, day succeeds day, and the duties of life repeat their demands. More and more, men come to see that the one over all obligation, the one foundation and assurance, is that we are not to think of any to-morrow, however near or far, but only and singly and simply refer to to-day, so using it that it shall go into the great account, indorsed by the only one hand that carries value with it at the last appeal. Well may we sing our psalms, and wreathe our wreaths and put out our floral tributes this sweet springtime, and well may children's carols repeat in our temples the tribute other children once, less blest than they, chanted in their temple,—

"For Jesus has risen, and man shall not die."

The Easter for us is the Easter in our hearts,—not the commemoration of a past fact, but the attaining of a present reality, not to hope that we shall rise from a place of the body's decay, but to be sure that we shall rise above the places of the soul's decay.

Easter, 1878.

XVI.

THE TENTH BEATITUDE.

"Blessed is he that waiteth."— DANIEL xii., 12.

THE beatitudes of the Gospels do not exhaust the beatitudes of God. They introduce us into an unknown field, but they do not lay before us all its ripened harvest. They give but a specimen of the fruit. In the old time, Sinai mutters and thunders, and with great mystery the man of God comes out of the cloud with two stone tables of very limited moral restriction. They read you scarcely more than the alphabet of duty, — some pretty stern moral restraints, but hardly the shadow even of a moral impulse. In the new time, the man of God sits down upon the ground on some unknown hill, and opens the treasury of life, scattering blessings as lavish and as broadly as the old mythology fables curses to have once spread themselves. They introduce us into an unknown field,—a field, as I believe, undiscovered or at most untilled by any philosophy or other faith; but it is only specimens of the fruit that they give. They advertise, they entice us toward the bowers and gardens of God, in which more such fruit ripens. The Apocalypse speaks of a little book that the angel swallowed, that was bitter to the taste, but afterward became sweet. So shall we find it in this field. In it streams bitter as Marah to the draught,

and yet leaving a lingering of sweetness that does not address a mortal sense, and in it trees seeming to be laden with apples of Sodom, but whose outer and topmost branches are heavy with the beatitudes of God; and perhaps you know that by the laws of nature, as the laws of the soul, the finest fruit is not borne and grown close to the central trunk, and within the grouped protection of leaves, but where on the outmost twigs the luscious vigor comes of battle and of storm. I do not wonder that, when Jesus ceased, and they were come down from the mountain, the people were astonished at his doctrine. People have not got over their astonishment yet, not come to believe in, not come to search for, not come to know the height and depth and breadth and wealth of the beatitudes of God.

The Commandments limited themselves to ten. Men asked themselves not, Is this right or wrong? but, Is it for or against the Commandments, is it mentioned or unmentioned by them? They have limited the beatitudes likewise. But the beatitudes of God are limitless. Those which Jesus gave were but specimens, hints, as to the direction in which one is to look, to search.

None of those you find in Matthew is any more richly true than this one I use as a text, which is a half-verse of the later portion of the prophecy of Daniel, and has no such meaning in its place as I put on it here. There is no one of you, however, but may recognize its truth, may see that it is of the same family as those of the gospel, has the divine image and superscription, and may well be introduced to us as of their lineage and spirit. It is not a bit more self-contradictory than any

of the others first seem to us, so slow to perceive the great inner reward hidden within the seeming contradiction of words, and in waiting readiness for any who will patiently knock, and, as all knockers have to do, wait until it is opened. Some one has spoken of the eleventh commandment: may we not regard this as the tenth beatitude?

Perhaps no virtue, no necessity, is so little understood, so hard to understand. It is not a virtue with a winning aspect, with a countenance that commends itself. You have to know it well, as you do some men, before you can discover what is really in them. The really best things, as the really best characters, do not show themselves at once. You must wait for their unveiling, for time and opportunity. And men look on waiting as barren, waste time, a misfortune, a barrier, a defeat. All about us is haste, and waiting is death. A petulant impatience stamps and characterizes us all the way through. Childhood betrays it, youth fosters it, maturity is a prey to it, and most of our troubles, individual, social, civil, financial, are because of it. Restless, exacting activity is our one acknowledged sign of life. We cannot endure pauses, rests, between whiles. They are stagnation and disaster: they prophesy death. You can't get a young man entering life to pause, look about, take time, consider himself and things, wait. Waiting is disgrace. Or, if he waits, he waits peevishly, restlessly. He gets no beatitude out of his waiting. His one purpose is to push on in that direction in which he has set up his goal, and every moment in which he does not see his actual advance toward it is lost time. He does not realize — no one does, save by

a good deal of experience — that waiting is oftentimes of surest advance. Carlyle says of Sterling " that the talent of waiting was the one that of all others he wanted most." People are apt to take life as a race, and to think they must distance all runners. If you are climbing a mountain, it is the people who are sitting down and resting every now and then, every now and then taking breath, who are serenest and in best condition at the top; those who husband resources; not the loiterers, but those who rest that they may win. And, in the climb of life, it is not the restless and fussy, the people who think the kingdom of heaven and everything else must be taken by violence, who make life one unwearying struggle, one protracted warfare, who do the best with it, get the most out of it, but those who know when and how to wait, who respect the halt that God and duty and circumstance call, and know how to make waiting turn into advantage, get the beatitude out of it. The best soldier is not he who marches best or who fights best, but he who waits best; who can keep up a firm and cheerful self-reliance under the most depressing delays; who can stand in his rank all day, while the battle delays its call on him; who compels delay to build him into bravery rather than allows it to dwindle him into a coward. Only take life in its parts and in its whole, and run it over in your thought, and it will surprise you,— not the marvellous demand for waiting, but the marvellous, the apparent, the transparent value, the blessing of it, what it does that no activity, the wisest, could do. The boy worried and worn over his task shuts book, gives it up, waits. You nor I can tell about it; but we can remember

how many a time, with a jump, we have said to ourselves, "I've got it." Whence, how, why, we know not; but, as we ceased to work, it came. "While I was musing, the fire burned," the Psalmist exclaims. As I waited, the truth dawned, not when I labored, struggled, fought. You puzzle yourself over the problems of life, balance the "would you" and "wouldn't you." Backward and forward, the shuttlecock flies. You get no result. You have to stop, wait, and to the waiting comes the solution. How many gravest ills have been relieved, as gravest mistakes prevented, by a simple waiting! With our habit of forcing things to issues, a habit we do not intermit when the things are God's and not our own, we make a Jehu-drive of it. Life is worse than a Brighton road or a lightning express. They have it now on some of the roads that the locomotive takes in water as it runs. So we run. Steam up all the time! Stopping is death! But stopping is life. Waiting is necessity. Else all manner of wear and tear and accumulation of danger. When one gets impatient or angry, and has been prevented from foolish act or hard word, he may see the blessing of it. How many times a man has to congratulate himself, "I am so glad I waited," or upbraids himself, "If I had only waited"! In an emergence, a danger, waiting is safer than rushing. In rush, confusion, waste effort, strength, loss of power, use, as of head. In waiting, the cool gathering of wits and will and energy, and the push at the proper moment of the proper thing.

That is prompt action which wisely waits. And so in every problem life sets us at, small or large, not the reckless dash of impulse, but the wise prudence of

delay, the just time for decision and wise action. It is not through waiting that one shall see the salvation of the Lord, as the Psalmist declares, so much as the salvation of himself from very trying mortifications and ugly defeats. I grant that many times "the waits" between the acts in the life-drama are tedious and try one to the uttermost, spirits, courage, faith; and we have no genial orchestra to fill in the interval. It is only dead waiting. We have all of us to meet such times (and may turn them into blessing, if we will). A little unperturbed waiting is the best service you can render yourself just now. And, in rendering it to yourself, it prepares you to render something to others by and by. It is not only the only thing you can do; but it brings the only solution, it wins the blessing. No optimistic philosophy asserts it, but that Christian faith, which, if it may not know the law nor trace the process by which waiting grows to blessing, can attest the fact. Waiting which is the necessity or the wisdom of condition or position, which is quiet and willing and patient, not an indolent indulgence nor peevish weariness, dissatisfaction, or indifference, is not waste. It is not to rust, to be of no use. It is part of discipline, a part of development, a step in progress, the getting ready for the best service. Not only is there the gravest truth in the much-quoted and little-understood line,

"They also serve who only stand and wait,"

but the beyond, the more valuable, the deeper truth is of waiting, as a vital part of the life process to which all life subjects, without which no life can be.

But I take the beatitude of waiting to be more pal-

pable in those affairs which may be said more intimately to concern the soul and God, to be between the two. It is here, as with the general in the field, that he proves the mettle of his soldiers. Without at all taking the sombre view of life, or feeling that there is any cause for that lugubriousness with which men speak of it, I recognize the fact, the pressure, the perplexities, and the pains of discipline, the soul agonies by which our mortal career is met and tried. And I know that many, the very best, see in these only the agony of discipline, never the beatitude. I find that in every trial we not only want to know the why and wherefore of it, not only desire to see the end of it, but to have the end at once, and the end as we want it. So far from its being man's real wish what he says in his daily prayer, "Thy will be done," he rather desires to dictate to the divine will. His real prayer is, and it has not just the prayer tone, "My will be done." It is not entreaty, but demand. It is our will, our time, our result. We pray one way, and we expect another. We wait for our issue, not God's. One hardly says to another a more unwelcome word than "wait," or urges himself to a more disagreeable duty. David says he waited patiently, and the Lord heard him. We don't believe in this, and get very impatient and unreasonable.

Our belief is that waiting has no fruits, at least not our fruits. But, just as everything has its specific return, its appointed beatitude, so waiting has. We disappoint and confuse ourselves, and get some hard feelings toward God, because we do not reflect what manner of fruit it is that we are to expect. We make no such mistake in

the things of nature: we ought not in things of spirit. There is a beatitude that comes of waiting and that comes of nothing else, and to take away the waiting were to deprive of the beatitude. We wait with the expectation, only too successfully disguised from ourselves, that waiting will bring some other than its own result,—the result we wish, not the result it can produce. It is the answer of our own dictation, not the answer possible to the thing,—we look for, demand, get dissatisfied, faithless, because we do not have. We do not realize that waiting has its perfect work in the slow and gradual ripening in wisdom and prudence, insight and foresight, which make life into quiet and self-reliance. The stormy men carry things by the hot impatience of assault, do wondrous things through sheer impulse and energy; but the waiting men are the stronger, steady, unwearying, holding. They are gainers even in the hot arena of life. And so more in the gravest ills of all. Waiting will not take away the chronic ail, restore nerves and bones and remove pain, nor will it bring to the empty arms and the lacerated heart what they are always crying for; but waiting brings the beatitude of God, quiet, peace, strength, trust, hope, not with the old bound and jubilance, but other graces, better,—quiet, peace, strength. We call it resignation; and the soul that is resigned, that has resigned itself after long and weary struggle, waiting as a little child, knows the beatitude that gives better than we ask. The common proverb, "Patient waiters are no losers," is as true of the things of God as of the things of man.

"Wait a little, fret not, and at last
Beauty will the barren boughs again

Tenderly reclothe, when the snows are past,
And the earth grows glad in sun and rain.

"Never vex your heart nor tear your hands,
Searching 'mid the thorns for vanished bliss;
For the soul that patience understands
Needs no wisdom more divine than this."

It takes a great while, as we count, sometimes to reach God's end. The end of our patience comes long before the end of his design. We reckon by hours and days, while God reckons only by growths. The tree's life is recorded by the concentric rings which, underneath the bark, tell the tale of the outward life, and so the soul. We hold out pretty bravely our own time, the time of our appointment. Job says, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait." The Christian does not, will not, says he cannot; the language of his conduct, "Just so long as it seems to me I ought will I wait." Even then, he waits with a good deal of impatience, asks a good many questions out loud, a great many more to himself; waits to see his own ends, not God's; starts a good many demons; holds back entire confidence; forgets Christ's utterances of submission, "Even so, Father," etc.; is anything but a resigned, a patient, a waiting waiter. We want to set the limit, to say how long we shall hold out; virtually, we say, "Now, we have done our part: it is quite time God did his." But we can't measure God: we can't hurry God, else he were no God. He does not move by our idea of time, but brings or drops his beatitude at the ripe moment when all things consent. And, then, we do not always know a beatitude when it comes. The disciples did not know theirs as they went sorrowing

to Emmaus. We go sorrowing, hearts preoccupied, earth-ways looking, eyes sealed. How shall we know, recognize, the beatitude which somehow, persistently, we vaguely hope shall come in the old joy-garb of the before time? As the old Jew was looking for quite other blessings than those which dropped their unexpected welcome upon him that morning, are we looking for what cannot come; and what can is very far from what we want. Even while the angel stands at our side, we turn, and murmur and cry out that no prayer is heard, and God is recreant, and woe is ours. Isn't it all because we will shape the way in which our desires shall be answered as well as the time within which they shall come? "I waited patiently," the Psalmist says. Paul and James lay a great deal of stress upon patient waiting. The latter exclaims, "Let patience have her perfect work"; but it can't, so long as one will not "quietly wait" for God, and heartily take what God sends. It is not more than half a faith that will not do both of these. One gets a sentiment of love and of surrender, of confidence, of conviction that all is right and well, down under agony and yearning where lies, while yet one is not grown into that uttermost of faith, that principle of faith which waits and takes the God-send, seeing the God in it where we cannot find our own desires.

Should it not be remembered by us, in all things, that the last prayer Jesus uttered, which he only at last uttered through the agony of sweat as blood, is the prayer that our will shall not be done, not merely that God's shall, but that it shall be at cost of ours? "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." We

write and talk a good deal about faith, and define it very carefully, and think we have got it, but there are tests to which it is seldom sufficient. And the test of waiting is perhaps its hardest, tries it and you as nothing else can. If active work, under the compulsions of doing, so long as one is busy, can lift and ease the heart-load by other cares, that bring a short forgetting, it is well; but the waiting time, when one cannot work, when one must stand still and think and bear, then is the hour and power of trial in the time when sorrow has become stale and has no longer an emotive intensity that counteracts its pain, in the time when day follows day in dull, unexpectant sameness, and trial is a dreary routine. People come to me sometimes, and show themselves perplexed, and puzzle me by saying they have prayed and prayed, and yet the thing is not removed, the difficulty stays, the load is just as great, the way as impassable, the prospect as gloomy; and they declare that there is no use in praying, that their faith halts, or else, in the agony of desire to hold their faith, they turn, and like the dying reptile sting themselves; and it is of very little use for me to try to discover for them the beatitude that has really come, so long as the hunger of the soul, unappeased, peremptorily demands the answer of their prayer. The wife tells me, with a sorrow words cannot reveal, that she has prayed over her recreant husband with all the earnestness of love to him and faith in God, but it avails nothing; and she turns upon herself, and thinks that somewhere there is a lack in her. And so there is. Not in love or faith, but in waiting, waiting God's time and way, which may never meet her expressed

desire, but which will give her blessing, if only she can hold out till it comes, if only she shall not demand that it come as she wills. To the very woman I am thinking of, though she did not recognize it, I saw the blessing that had come in the sweetness and power into which her own character grew.

In the night struggle of Jacob, that scene which theology has distorted and defamed into an actual wrestling match between the patriarch and Jehovah, the young contestant exclaimed, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." The holding out until the blessing come, the pursuing although faint,—that is what we need. The suffering spirit tells me of a state of reaching out and longing for help which no living man or woman can give, and which God does not give, of a struggle that increases in intensity and in dissatisfaction at result. What can I say to that? Only what seems unkind, useless words, "Wait,"—wait not for what you are looking, praying for, craving, but for the beatitude. God never said he would answer that way: he will give the beatitude because of that, but not answer as you ask. Paul prayed that the thorn in his flesh should be removed, as he says thrice,—a statement of intensity rather than of numerical accuracy, as Jesus prayed thrice that the cup might pass, and yet the Great Will saw it was better that the prayer should not be heard, saw that there lay the way of strength and growth, did not grant the petition, but sent the beatitude. And he confesses to the blessing that he found by waiting, not the thorn removed, but the thorn improved into such means of grace as lifted him above what he could otherwise have been. He

would have owned the beatitude, and that to have that was infinitely more than only to have had an answered prayer. You do not need that I define to you a beatitude of God. Jesus did not do it. He simply said such and such things, such and such people are blessed. The people were astonished, and went down from the mountain amazed. But people have ever since been finding out what the beatitudes of God are, that they lie just where he said. Experience has been defining it to them as no language would undertake. Sermons and volumes have been taken up in defining this and the other of what we call "the Beatitudes." Only life can do it. Only as God leads a soul into the experience can he know anything about it, nor can he turn round and describe it all to another. "Only he who feels it knows." So with this which men have not been used to regarding as a beatitude, only as something wrong in themselves, something inexplicable in God. The blessing of it must be felt: it cannot be described. And I think that it brings in its single self all that is promised to all the other beatitudes. Blessed are they that wait, for they shall be comforted, see God, inherit the earth, and theirs is the kingdom of heaven. We earn their several blessings all in one while we come to say,—

"Not that my Father gives to me
More blessings than in days gone by,
Dropping in my uplifted hands
All things for which I blindly cry,

"But that his plans and purposes
Have grown to me less strange and dim;

And, where I cannot understand,
I trust the issues unto him.

"And, spite of many broken dreams,
This have I truly learned to say,
Prayers which I thought unanswered once
Were answered in God's own best way."

January, 1876.

XVII.

HELPS.

"They used helps."—Acts xxvii., 17.

The Euroclydon was a north-east wind. Paul and his shipmates were sailing pleasantly along under a southerly breeze, when the wind suddenly veered, and coming in quick flaws down the sides of Mount Ida set the sea into terrible commotion. We do not get the force of the description in our English translation. The season was late for their voyage, and there had been already delay, disappointment, and difficulty. Lured by the soft blowing of a south wind, forgetful of the past, and oblivious to possible treachery of wind or wave, they were sailing as on a summer sea, towing their boat astern, when they were struck with this Levanter, as it is now called. With the force of a hurricane, it whirled them round, as the Greek signifies, so that the pilot could not hold his vessel to her course, but had to let her drive. Running under the lee of an island called Clauda, and getting for a little into smoother water, they rounded to, and with difficulty hoisted aboard their boat; and, as their great danger was from foundering, they undergirt the ship, for which emergency the vessels of the time were specially provided. The undergirders, "helps," were ropes for passing around the hull of the ship, and thus keeping the

planks from starting; and the process, resorted to infrequently, yet taught to all sailors even in our day, is, by the seaman of the English navy, called "frapping." To frap a ship is to pass four or five turns of a large cable-laid rope round the hull to support her in a storm. It is a means of prevention in the extensive use of wire in modern ship-building rarely resorted to. It would not stop a leak, but would prevent the working of the planks and timbers, and so increase the safety under the stress and strain of the storm.

They had gone to sea provided against contingency, evidently not fair-weather sailors. There was some pretty good seamanship and some very considerate forethought.

I am not going to follow up the figure of a voyage, but what I want to say is that we are not put out into all the cares and conflicts of life alone and by ourselves to contend with the sudden and tempestuous things, but are provided by the Infinite Ruler with helps with which to undergird our weakness and carry ourselves safely through. These helps are all about us, ready to our use, helps to childhood and to age, to every kind of condition, infirmity, need. Many of them are so plain that we accept and go to them without instruction as by a sort of instinct; while many of them are only to be found as the experiences of life develop in us needs, or reveal the character of things about us, their oftentimes unsuspected helpfulness.

See how it was that in the very beginning God surrounded man with helps, evident helps, left not himself without witness, in that he provided him with the things requisite and necessary to the on-carrying of life,—life

not merely on its lower level of animal necessity, but life in its better moral and intellectual development. Run your thought back to the early movements, to the first knowledge and advance of man as the Scriptures detail it to us. See how, in the beginning, God contrived and all the way down has kept in operation an ever-ready, varying, and effective system of helps, which he has introduced and recommended to man, and by which he has shown that he is meant to come up into the broad freedom and power of life by which he should grow out of any mere condition of birth into something broader and better. Always has there been some communication of the divine with the human, the Infinite with the finite, the parent with the child. The heavens have never been silent: God has never been dumb. We who boast our Christian privilege are not the only to whom God has come. Not the patriarchs only they with whom God walked, and whom he has honored as his friends. It is quite time we outgrew the selfish exclusiveness of our faith, and came to comprehend that, whatever the peculiar gift and privilege to man through Christ may be, God has never refused himself to any, forgotten any, left any alien, helpless. There is no grosser libel on the divine character than that which represents him as confining his mercies and his light to the narrow line of patriarchal descent and Jewish pedigree, such as have heard of the God of Moses and of Christ. He has sent his helps down to all men, not through Moses and Isaiah and Jesus and Paul alone,— though these stand confessed as chiefest among ten thousand,— but through Confucius and Zoroaster and Sakya-Muni and the hosts of

the wise and struggling of every time and name; nor has the Good Spirit forgotten his children of Western forest and far-off islands of the sea. I do not know the why about it all, why so few have been as yet permitted to see the light and know the truth, as you and I may know and see it; but this I know,—if God be God, it is a terrible mistake and injustice that we are guilty of when we imagine the man who stoops to say a prayer to a block of wood and stone is not a God-child, and is not helped by a divine love, not such as may satisfy us indeed, but such as shall satisfy his plan and wisdom. And who shall say that these are not the best helps to the man in that condition, the God-intended helps to that level and range of capacity and of need, supplying according to ability, and filling out the divine intention so various for all his children, in all so complete?

The universe is a multitude of helps. It is not a mere creation, a mystery, a beauty, but a thing made for helpful use. You cannot go any whither that it does not thrust out its helps toward you. In every corner, they hide; at every wayside, they proclaim themselves; from everywhere, they start out at you; by day, by night, in solitude, in multitude, in cities, at the uttermost parts of the sea, their hands are outstretched. They need no trumpeter, they proclaim themselves. The writer of the Book of Hebrews speaks of being encompassed by a cloud of witnesses. Much more are we encompassed by the crowd of helps, things that not only witness to a divine glory, proclaim a divine power, suggest a divine love, but things that help toward the knowing of the divine love and the doing

the divine will. And the thing for man is to know these helps and use them; to learn to see them not with eye and mind only, but with heart. Spring days, summer hours, passing showers, autumn fruits, storms and winds and stars and sky; the melting, the awe-inspiring; the familiar, the rare; the grand, the minute,—we must take them out of the region of sentiment or of indifference, make them other than mere belongings to the outside of life, recognize in them helps to lift us into better things, and use them as such, not overlooking or despising, not blind nor deaf nor dumb, but awake, prizing, and so growing. So it was that Jesus grew. The universe was full of helps to him: he recognized and used them. Not the least escaped him. Nay, the way he used the least, the great things he drew from them, left the impressive truth for man that there are no little things. The lily of the summer, the flight of the bird, the color of the evening cloud, the seed of mustard, the leaven of the household, the fish of the sea, the scorpion of the shore, the mote in the eye, overlooked, insignificant, become mighty ministrants to mighty truths and mighty issues. We, too, must learn to search for the helping hands that stretch themselves out from every portion of God's universe toward these human souls of ours, lifting and holding, guiding, girding, guarding, bolstering and keeping aloft, so that we can put out our hand of need no whither but a responsive clasp awaits it, a firm and cheering grasp. The poet tells us of the footprints on the shore that the forlorn and shipwrecked sees and takes heart again. He uses the footprint as his help. The little weed on the tossed Atlantic came to the distressed Columbus,

and he used its help and found America; and the astronomer used the aberration of the heavenly body, and it put him on the track of wonderful prophecy and quick discovery. There is no want, no distress, no strait of man but the myriad-handed universe stretches itself to his relief. He has only to accept and to use. These helps are ready for us in the grave detail of our daily lives, where we are so constantly needing help; and they come to us in many ways to our many needs, and by them we grow into all life and progress and success, and make fruitful and beautiful the most barren way and the most trying tasks. It is a brave thing surely to take one's stand, to try to be strong, to be resolved to do, to be, to bear; but it is only a refined madness when any one takes the stand disdaining helps, as too many do,— the young man amid his perils, the young girl in her inexperience, the maturer man or woman amid the complications of circumstance or the pressure of trial. We can never go alone, forego helps, are never strong enough or wise enough. We may never venture on life's sea without them. We may reject what men propose, what they elect, would force upon us; but we must elect for ourselves, and hold to and believe in others what our growing wisdom and needs discover to be useful. To know what is good for help as the bird knows what is good for food, to make help often out of things antagonistic and adverse, never to turn the helps into hindrances, always to discover and use the hidden and disguised blessing,— in this lies some of our best wisdom; and they who so use life walk in the broadest liberty, and find that a garden of all fruit which to others seems but a dry and parched and barren wild.

When people talk about the helps to be used toward a religious life, they a good deal run to a few stereotype things, and there leave it, as if it exhausted the demand. Our religion suffers greatly that way. We are taken to a few things; we are told these are the only helps, and are urged to use them; if we are to get into the coveted kingdom, it is by these means alone. But I come more and more to believe that the Church overlooks and mistrusts many good things, and so leaves the man without help of much that is of the highest use, much he would gladly and profitably use, only it were not forbidden. I find that Jesus had little respect for the things in which the Jewish leaders had compressed the only helps for the people of his day; and that outside them wholly he found the things helpful to him, which were to help people into his kingdom. To-day, our church allowings are most arbitrarily restricted — in something of Old Testament narrowness — to a special round of things which have got a church impress and the indorsement of custom and time. But these do not exhaust the list, nor do they include many of the best helping things. When men say, "Go to Jesus, go to church, read your Bible, have your times of communion and prayer, these are the appointed means of grace, which, after all, though in somewhat modified phrase, is the allowance, the prescription, the limitation of our own sect. I say, Very well; but do not stop here. These are not all. There is a wide range of help outside, which a man may find adapted to his own private, peculiar want, opportunity, temperament, which no man may catalogue for another, which accepted by another none may gainsay,— these are often

the richest to him, the really invaluable. And I hold that every really growing, honest man must have his own special ways of climbing along the heavenly heights, of getting access to their immeasurable height and worth, use his own helps,— things which are not the prescribing of any authority, but the discovery, the necessity, of his own experience. His richest life, that which is really, immediately, and individually his, will come that way. We may totter in the infancy of all effort, more securely in leading-strings; but, so soon as we get to firm step and just poise, to be able to really go alone, we only come to our true gait by taking the pace, the stride, the paths we find best adapted to ourselves. We must assert selfhood in everything, if we are to be anything. Biographies amply attest to us how souls that have lagged wearily under the old reiteration and routine ripen into marvellous richness the moment they leave off servile copying of others and take matters into their own hands, and seek and find food that is convenient for them. Very much of what we find sanctioned, demanded, has no real regard to or adaptation for the actual want of the soul. It is the mistaken limiting of a far-back, ignorant, bigoted past, that never glimpsed the depth of human nature or the breadth of divine requirement. However it may have sufficed for generations past, it cannot answer for to-day, is not nourishing the souls to-day as they require to be nourished, is not building souls as the kingdom of God.

The religious life, the thing we really want to have, a thing of root and vigor, is never fairly got where so much of God's making, both in man and

nature, is neglected. Our religion fails to make whole men and women. Parts of us never grow, are not encouraged to grow, which are as much needed to a just development of character as any. How many real graces what are called the world's people have, which what are called the church's people rarely show! How much richer their lives, though the technicalities of their faith and their anise and cumin may not be so exact! The Puritan and the Quaker and the strict church member, ignoring some of the best helps to a broad and lovely Christian life, have failed in some of the essential qualities, and have brought a grave distrust of and a deep dislike to that thing they are undertaking to commend. I do not believe good books, singing psalms, dry talk, dreary discussions, much Bible language, strictly kept Sundays, painful precision of demeanor, frowning upon innocent enjoyment, or the accepted paraphernalia and machinery of our religious institutions, are the only helps to be used in growing toward Jesus, were the only helps he used in growing toward God. He believed in the other part of his own nature as he did in the other side of God's, and set himself to find and to use the neglected helps with which life was full; and he would set us at the same thing. I believe God's glory in the world, God's providence in history, God's truth in science, God's gladness in nature, all that is good and brave and bright in life, modest traits that we neglect, powers of mind and act pious people shake their heads at, things men have stamped as devices of the devil, purely innocent and joyous as in themselves they are,— these, a host, and others one cannot even at the moment hint at, may

be made to be useful helps in the best outgrowth whose best fruit is never reached through mere church-going and creed and ceremony. The open eye, the seeing heart, may find ready, waiting everywhere, helps to lead into the great stores of a divine wisdom and love, the broad reaches of a noble human life. We must not refuse them, but accept and use them, and feel that in this universe of God nothing that is in itself innocent and lovely but may be, must be, was intended to be of useful help to the immortal man ; feel deeper than that that nothing is so low and vile, so hard and hopeless, but, rightly met and used, it may be turned into the best strength of life. The best helps to man are oftentimes the bad things in him and about him, which he learns rightly to use. But the greatest help after all — one many learn to overlook, to do without and so make no real, great life — is the help we may be to ourselves, the help we may get from the better part of our own natures. We are not left impotent, compelled to wait for angels or for man : we can be in no condition, no strait, where we may not help ourselves, and as no other helps may. One would not put other things, other necessities, other relations and circumstances out of sight, deny their weight, their help. Only should we always remember that the way into the highest and broadest excellence comes of the use of the self, the help that our own individuality adds to whatever is without us or above us.

The maxim of daily prudence is, "Put as much into the world as you take out of it," and the maxim of a right life should be, "As much as other things help you, so much, at least, be sure you help yourself."

The strength of men, their efficiency, the great and valuable things they do, the grand characters they grow to, the lives they lead, are because they use this self-help. They do not stand by and let other things help them, or use the things about them merely; but they use the helps that are in themselves,— things of which every man has more store than he is apt to be conscious or to put in motion. In the war years, we saw men, under emergence, grow to sudden and great life, become equal to new and immense responsibility, found them capable of great duty and sacrifice,— men we knew, boys, the playthings still of our firesides. It was not the emergence made them, that sounded the alarm, that beat the drum, but it was the helps in the self that made them cool, resolute, courageous, equal to demand, that drew out of them what no circumstance, position, could have created. We rise within ourselves to the level of obligation, or we do not rise at all. The hour would have called them in vain, as it did call some, or would have betrayed them as it did betray some, but for the answering help within. That not only responded to demand, but was set at use; and we all know in the more ordinary things of our own humdrum lives that, in the proportion as we use the helps that are *in* us, lean on ourselves, walk without a crutch, we make real success, right advance, true life. It is not those who make life to be a pushing out of tendrils, a feeling for supports, whose word is, "would you," "wouldn't you," but those who thrust themselves up straight and stalwart, self-reliant, who make the mark and take the prize, are men in fact as in semblance. They have what the

tree has, great store of succulence at the roots, life from them for remotest branch and tiniest twig, supply which no use exhausts; but the more the demand for help, the more help there is. Use multiplies. The fount is exhaustless. The more one uses, the more he has to use; and so he grows into the full maturity of power. Not despising the helps which come from every other quarter, let no man forget the helps that lie within. Learn to know, to test, to trust them; for, without their consenting, the most favored being fails.

The sailors in the little vessel in which Paul was wrecked not only had helps with them, but used them, knew how to use them. They answered their purpose, and saved them at that time. Sailing our sea of life, tossed and torn many times by the sudden and savage Euroclydon, let us see to it that we are not merely provided with, but can use helps. From the least to greatest, from greatest to least, let us not be blind to, let us not deny, the helps toward the fullest life which our God has bountifully supplied us with, placing them in our right hand and our left, in every place and every guise. They are too the undergirding of our craft, often in straits, with gaping seams, in a dark night, a stormy sea, near an uncertain shore. They make stanch what is weak or has been strained. They set us, encouraged, on our farther way, to new perils or to safe harbors. God gives helps. Christ blessed them. Let us use them,—use them as Jesus did,—not as side things, now and then, running to them in stress as exceptional and outside, but use them as living parts of every day's effort and life.

June, 1875.

XVIII.

THE SILENT COMFORTER.

"Sleep on now, and take your rest."—MATT. xxvi., 45.

THESE are the words not of anger, not of reproach, of sympathy only, the pitying sympathy of Jesus. Possibly, a something of weariness in their tone, but the weariness that of his own struggle, not a weariness with their apathy or neglect. It was the word of the strong man to the weak, of a compassion brave enough to forget itself, to minister to other need. It said, "The evil is at hand, but, while it delays, take the boon God gives, rest, sleep,"—tender words, the reflection of that tender spirit in him. What he threw into them was just what he was always throwing into life, in exact quantity, at the exact moment, to the exact need, and only what could advantage. I can well conceive that some other kind of man, having left his friends in charge, would have been enraged at what he would have considered their faithlessness, that he would have heaped upon them epithet and every upbraiding,—so much our own necessity takes precedence of every consideration with us. He would not consider them, their excuses, or appreciate their position at all, only himself and what he had demanded. Jesus had first thought for others. He did not weakly overlook the fact that he had given them a charge, or, more exactly,

had expected of them the sleepless vigilance of friendship. He had taken the eleven with him from the table. From these, he had separated the three, taking them a little farther away. To the former, he had simply said, "Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder." To Peter and the sons of Zebedee, he gave the more exact charge, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me." The outer band or guard were simply to sit and wait: the inner band were to tarry and watch. Thrice, he came back. They were heavy with sleep. Could they not watch? sadly he asks, not upbraidingly. He was yet tossed, troubled, yearning, feeling out for that human aid and sympathy we all yearn and feel out for, and just as vainly as we do. When his own victory was come, when he had established his own spirit, when he was ready to meet his doom, this is all forgotten, and his sympathy for them is roused; and he says, "Sleep on now, and take your rest." What else could he say, what better could they do? It was their need. The hour was upon them: they were better sleeping till it came. And it was well to sleep beneath the benediction of the Christ.

So always with Jesus was it, always adapting himself to the hour, his own necessities never obscuring the claims of others. To every class, to every man, to every condition, his ready sympathy, measured and just,—to Syro-Phœnician, Magdalen, Nicodemus, leper, sinner. And it was what won people so. There were many at that time pretending to do marvellous works, but we do not read of them as beloved by the people. Great deeds never make people beloved. Nobody would have loved

Washington simply for gaining battles, and I think our last conqueror fails of lodgment in the popular affection because, much as we may admire and rejoice in success, we fail to discover the nameless but resistless evidences of a great heart. We love traits, men. And Christ was loved because he loved, because he was full of that loving quality or essence which was running out in word and deed, and almost from garment hem, so natural, so inevitable, so full and free as to be almost unconscious, never falling short in its measure, never making mistake in its application.

And this not a divine quality, not something exceptionally his, not something too high for us, not what we shall vainly wish for and struggle to attain. A very human virtue, in him perfected, in us the power of perfecting it. The germs of it lie in our common nature. They spring neither from civilization nor from Christianity. They exist in savage natures. Civilization, Christianity, are but educators, not creators. In us all, the existence of a spirit of sympathy; in us all, the power to aid men by our sympathies; and in you and in me, as we sit here, or as we live in the Christian community, a longing to minister to men with our sympathies. There is an outgo of sympathetic emotion daily, and, better and deeper than that, such as perceptibly qualify the spirit of our day. We are not so desperately selfish as theology and only too much of our conduct would make us out: we are not pachydermatous, tough-hided, as regards the interests of our fellows, certainly not as regards their sufferings. Indifferent enough, pressing hard in the rough-and-tumble hurly-burly of every-day ambition and career, our better part crusted

over by success and struggle, but all our indifference dropped, our injustice forgotten, our better self roused the moment that the fact of want or suffering can be brought before us. Perhaps too apt at times to be unreasoning in our sympathies as before we were in our neglects. Bring tangibly before any man, lead him where he shall see with his own eyes, or let the tale of distress come so that it carries credence, you need no arguing, no persuading; the conviction is in the fact, and he is ready, anxious to assist, or, where assistance is impossible, quick with his sentiment of compassion. Every day, man's daily troubles beat against other human hearts; and they respond on that note to which our common humanity is keyed. And when some great catastrophe such as from time to time startles and appalls, some great sob from the bosom of the ocean, subdues continents with its solemn mystery, rouses us from our security, carries swift death to many beloved, sorrow to a thousand homes, and horror to every heart, one almost feels a pride in this quickly touched common nature, bowing itself in sympathy, feeling so keenly with and for those made near kin for the time by the great fellowship of suffering. It may be true that in ordinary time, in the pressure and struggle, in thought of merchandise and form and the anxious cares of existence, we regard too little our fellow in his ordinary stress and want, are careless about adding unnecessarily to the complicated burdens men about us bear, or, with something of grim determination, bind them ourselves; but let the reverse come that comes sharply, that stirs and rouses the dormant better man, that touches the universal human chord, and you find under the slumber-

ing ashes of the deadest seeming heart glow and burn the fires of human sympathy. The poet's truth,—

"One touch of nature makes the whole world kin,"

will bear broadening. The world feels its kinship in suffering. Men's troubles prove that there is something in man's brotherhood. Their cries reach responsive hearts, our tears rise for the dead, our sympathies go out toward the living. He is very dead, and had better be that quite, who never rouses out of himself to feel for his suffering fellow.

Our real trouble is not that we do not feel, but that we do not know how to let the feeling out, so that it shall do justice to ourselves and be of help to others. How shall we make our feeling for another available, how become ministrant of the balm we fain would carry, how know the best time and way? I know that something in me quickly responds to human misfortune; I know that I am always longing to be of use, pained to stand so idly by; that I would gladly put my arm around or beneath, and let the sufferer put full weight on me, or press lips surcharged with the very soul of sympathy against those parched with unanswered prayers. I know that feet and heart would run nimble errands, that hand and tongue ache to be doing something that shall relieve. Forgive the first person, singular. It is what each one of you knows, what each one of you feels, the whole being quivering in its earnestness to be of use, to stay the torrent of event, to stanch the tear, to ward off the blow, to bear some part, to do something, nay, even to bear the whole. Show the way by which really we may share the bur-

den, and the whole community will vie in effort. Tell me how I may lighten or lift another's load, and I were less than human to refuse. Just here comes in the barrier, here we are baffled by the limitings a divine hand has placed, here our impotence begins. In life's affairs, in life's career, its stress, its strife, one may oftentimes come in opportunely, see the thing to be done and do it, confirm the wavering and set him on a sure place, or point the way and go with one in it. These heart-griefs lie within a province in which we have no place, in which human help is vain. All we can do is to feel. A few who are near and dear and chosen, and have opportunity, and can see just where and how, may become, do become, blessed ministrants through that voiceless language that lies in considerate acts, in tones and looks, and all the uncatalogued ministrations, active and sympathetic, love so well knows how to devise,—which, done so sweetly and so kindly and so naturally, seem done unconsciously, and in that seeming carry the half of their beatitude. But, outside that circle, little can be done; and men must stand idly by, knowing that they are impotent to relieve. We are apt to think, till taught by experience, that speech is the great sympathizer or vehicle of sympathy, that true feeling necessarily has voice, that to be dumb is not to feel. For one, human sorrow strikes me dumb, occasion masters the man. I think God wants all speech to himself then, and his speech is in the event to the heart's own silence. "He talked to me so beautifully," some say. It seems to me that beautiful speech is for other occasion; and on such occasion man's speech, however it may tone expected phrases,

is but babbling. You may speak with the tongue of men and of angels, and, though it be not as sounding brass and tinkling cymbal, yet it has no might. Speech is no burden-bearer. That wipes out nothing, soothes nothing, bears nothing. Job's friends were right. They didn't begin to talk, to do anything until after the first sharpness was over; and then they did what seemed the best for strengthening him, first recognized his great sorrow, and then, in their way, sought to bring out the lessons of it, and to help him bear it. Jesus did the same, only he had this one great advantage: there was always something he could do at once. His sympathy could take tangible shape, he could lift up the widow's son or the ruler's daughter, or by presence and counsel strengthen and cheer his disciples. It was very little that he ever said.

I think that the tenderest and truest, the most direct and helpful way of meeting sorrow or suffering is simply to recognize it. That should be our human prompting, and it will be found about the best human help. When I find, as find I shall, without parade of feeling or speech, a recognition of my condition, that he who holds me by the hand enters into the fact of my suffering, allows for it, then have I the beginning of comfort. And these are not the mere words they may seem, as those know who have had experience. It has a good deal been thought that our Christian religion demanded that we sternly put our hands as it were at the throat of every sorrow, and hold it down till we have taken its life away. You will find at just the time men need to be met and treated with the most considerate delicacy that they are called upon to stiffen them-

selves back to the very sternest endurance. Men and women think it the right thing to upbraid you for giving way to feeling, and talk about want of faith, and exhort you to put your trust in God, or it may be "the merits of Christ," and harrow you with the suggestion that all the writhing of your human agonies only shows that you have no faith, or that you have done some sin, and make their consolations into outrage and insult both to your suffering and the God by whose will you suffer. They do not recognize the suffering in you: you are only somebody for them to let off their phrases at, sometimes, I think, their cant or impatience. And ministers do that, and preach unhuman and inhuman private sermons to a harassed, tortured spirit, madly unwilling to recognize the under human fact of grief, which by God's will exists, and by God's law must have its way. Such sons of consolation — Heaven help the mark! — all they ordained to be in the service of ordination are instructed they must be, if they are to do their duty. I remember that after experience had taught me what sorrow is and what the limits are to sympathy, what one may hope for and what he cannot find, I wrote an afflicted friend, one of our widest known and best-respected clergymen, to whom trouble was not new: "The human heart has its griefs which must have their way. Faith has no control over them. They must rule us and tear us before we can fall back upon and get strength from faith." His reply was, "What you say is very true: the human heart is one thing, and faith is quite another; but it is not every one who knows it." But every one should know it. We ought not to go on expecting, demanding of others

or ourselves what we cannot have, doubly wretched under distress because we do not find at the moment's need what we supposed the moment would not only demand, but supply. It is what the soul suffers, its dark way, its heavy burden, its sore trial, its weakness, distress, doubt, even unreasonableness, that must be recognized as the first relieving work of sympathy,—just that recognition Jesus, so wise in all things, had of those humble friends sleeping in the garden. And after recognition, which is in itself a strengthening, may come, by occasion, a varied ministry, not of word, but work; and happy he who has it in his power, in the intimate and wise intercourse of daily confidence and society, to discharge the nameless and numberless indirect acts of kindness which tide one over the severities of his distress, and help him to stand again and renew the activities and meet the fresh obligations of life. And then, if you are a sufferer, you must not expect too much of sympathy: if you are a sympathizer, you must not attempt too much. Do not feel that occasion asks or allows of some great thing. The least thing may often hold most soul. The best things of the kingdom, no more than the kingdom itself, come with observation. A simple hand grasp, the tone in which one said, "God bless you," have done me more good than all orations. If not gold and silver, they were frankincense and myrrh. Sometimes, silence is the truest expression as well as greatest benediction, as the poet says it is with the angels; and wise indeed is he who knows when to refrain as how to speak. At most there is but little one may do, and that little lies among things so trifling that the unpractised eye

might easily overlook them, and men of the world would think there was nothing in them. If you can carry a little sunlight from the outer world into a sick chamber or the sunlight of your own spirit where other spirits sit in the eclipse; if you can take a smile in where is only gloom; if, without direct word or deed, you make it felt that yours is a really human sympathy, —do you not bring the best, and what the sufferer learns to feel is the all that you can bring?

They brought flowers and hung them in my chamber before eyes weary with the long day and night and the worrying dance of everything that in strange maze perplexed, and words cannot tell how their compensating colors soothed my weariness and bade down the tormenting demons and brought rest.

And so it is among the graver things. One does not want some great thing done: one knows instinctively that no great thing can be done. Only he wants the little compensating thing of sympathy to steady and restore the unbalanced self, and help him with cooled and even head take his place again at duties he had dropped. It is not to have our burden lifted that we expect, but the chance ourselves to recover poise, so that, though we may stagger beneath, we shall not be crushed by it.

It is not worth while ever to repress the instinct of sympathy, and forbear the little thing your spirit prompts. Many a thing you offer timidly will come to you again, bringing its full sheaf. We are all near of kin, and we do not want to be estranged, and we can come nigh in sorrow as never in joy. Sorrow makes quick friendships. Genuine sympathy never intrudes,

rarely mistakes. It is keen in perception, gentle in administration. Delicate and tender its touch as an infant's breath would be upon a gaping wound. Though it may not say, "Peace, be still!" with the authoritative word of Jesus, may it not help the bruised and troubled to sleep and rest?

And I have long looked at it as a most blessed compensation to our own troubles that they teach us how to sympathize with others; yes, they teach us also what sympathy itself is. Like so many other things, that is the child of experience. Only they who have suffered can know what suffering is. Only by suffering is it that we know what sympathy is, what are the medicaments it can minister, what are its needs. Men say, "I sympathize with you"; and they are honest and think they do, but they cannot, unless they have gone along that self-same way.

I have had men say to me in their own troubles, "I used to think I felt for and with others, but now I see I did not." You can only really sympathize in what you have yourself felt; and you will find that unconsciously you turn from the language of those you know have had no experience, and crave even the silence of those whom you know have before you gone down into the abysses and drank of the bitter waters.

You may throw all your heart into it, by every imagination, but, if it have not actually pressed its hot and heavy hand upon you, you cannot know what affliction is, you cannot know the sympathy that starts quick within one as he feels that another has come within the great guild and mystery of grief, nor can your very truest word give that something of nameless, unutter-

able support which comes from one who is known to have been a sufferer. In every circle, you will find those who seem singled out, whose society is craved, who get to be the ones sent for and relied upon, not because of any eloquent tongue, or much doing, or any special grace of tact, but because of the grace that is only of experience, that teaches them just what to do and when to forbear.

There are some faces on which sorrow has written that which is more comforting than all beatitudes; some tones that have a music in them joy never has; some manners it would seem only angels could put on, and all learned under the stern and fiery, the purifying, elevating ministry of trouble, the school in which souls are taught life's holiest duties, and led into life's grandest issues. Doesn't it show how far we fall short even of fidelity to our own convictions, when we have such reluctance to come under the disciplines we know to be essential to lifting us out of the lowness of the flesh into almoners to other men of the best teachings of God?

It is a divine gift and privilege, this power of sympathy; and it has a divine mission,— divine in that it leads us among the superior things, and shows us how we, too, may handle the things that ally us with God.

Real sympathy is no native gift: it is beyond that. The finest feelings, the most exquisite adapting of ourselves to others' stand-point, do not give it. It is a thing of culture, and its crowning culture is from sorrows ourselves have met and have wisely borne. But that sympathy, even keenest, truest, quickest, cannot do everything. It is strong, but it is limited. Where-

ever man essays to help his fellow-man, he finds himself shut in by inexorable limitings. There is only so much that he can do.

There is a divine decree, "Thus far, no farther." In the sharp hour of trial, as the poet says: —

> "Fain would earth's tried and dear
> Save in this hour.
> But art not thou more near,
> Art thou not love and power?
> Vain is the help of man; but thou
> Canst send deliverance even now."

It is all shut up in that. The only and the greatest thing man is capable of is trust in God. Blessed the man who knows his capacity and asserts it, and grows from the radiant trust of childhood to the chastened trust of maturity. Only as we trust, do we indeed live, coming to be content, though we cannot fill the yawning abysses or fathom the fathomless will, in the conviction that God is over all and over all for good. Let us do the little that we may: let us stand by each other in our troubles with everything that is possible in human aid; but let us not forget that, where man fails, there God begins, and that he, notwithstanding human failure, is able with unutterable peace and blessing to bless those who put their trust in him.

Dec. 7, 1873.

XIX.

FRAGRANT LIVES.

"And the house was filled with the odor."— JOHN xii., 3.

AN odor is among the subtlest things in the material world. No one has yet been able to analyze or demonstrate the essential action of a perfume. Gas can be weighed, but not scents. The smallest known creatures, the very monads of life, can be caught by a microscope lens, and made to deliver up the secrets of their organizations; but what it is that emanates from the pouch of the musk, that for years and years retains its penetrating odor, and what it is that the warm summer air brings to us from the flowers, or what it is that is locked up in the sandal-wood, no man has yet been able to determine, so fine, so subtle, so imponderable, it has eluded both our most delicate weights and measures and our strongest senses. The four Evangelists tell us, all of them, that at a feast there was an anointing of Jesus. They tell it with a good deal of variety. Even discrepancy of detail, even the two who were present. And they place it at different times in his life. Generally, it has been supposed that there were two similar occasions,— one near the beginning of his ministry, one at its close. But this seems improbable; and both Matthew and John, the two present, agree as to the time as just prior to the arrest. The more nat-

ural thing is to consider the incident one and the same, the differences to be with the narrators, not in the narrative.

Besides the other things told of the ointment, that it was of spikenard, in an alabaster box, and very costly, John has thought it worth while to add that the odor of it filled the house, and so somehow has added, in a few words, an element of peculiar and abiding interest. It attracts our attention, and gives us quite other thought than if the ointment had simply been costly. I do not believe we should have thought much of that. It would not have made us read the account a second time, or dwell upon it in fancy or memory. But, the moment you read that the odor of it filled the house, you are all attention. That is another matter. In all times, among all peoples, perfumes have held high rank. The sense of smell is a peculiarly refined and delicate enjoyment. John adds a fact that gives exquisite finish to the story.

It was not a very big house. Houses at that time were not apt to be, though of the better sort. Simon's might be the best house in the village, and yet not such a one as we should select as the abode of a man of influence or of property. Lazarus would have had a less lordly home. Never mind that. John who was there, when he came many years after to think it over, to tell about it, remembered that all through the house was the perfume from the broken alabaster box. He seems to have forgotten other incidents, or to have considered them not worth repeating; but this was still fresh in his memory, worth telling. All the guests had been sensible of that delicious odor which filled the house;

and it came to him again as he gathered together the threads of remembrance, fresh to his old age as then to his early manhood. What is it about an odor that makes it a lingerer in memory, like the sound of a voice, which will come back to you and mightily move you over the dead waste of years, and recall things long slumbering, and that would have continued to slumber but for the resurrection power these imponderable, subtile things have? What is this mysterious tying together of spirit and sense? Not the odor of the vase alone has attracted the ages. The odor of the deed far more. The house was filled with the fragrance of spikenard: the world has been filled with the fragrance of gratitude. It was not the offering of a broken alabaster box, but the pleading of a broken heart, the tribute of a contrite spirit to one who had inspired her sin, her penitence, with confidence and hope. Next day, next hour, the invisible powers had absorbed to themselves, had scattered, wafted away, the perfume of the ointment. A stranger coming in had not been conscious of that which but now had made all glad, strong for a little and then vanishing away. But the deed, from its unexhausted store, has been pouring out its perfume till the whole world is full of it. What Jesus said of it is true. "Whereso-ever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this that this woman hath done be told for a memorial of her." Time but gives it more and more,— is not a destroyer, but a renewer, a preserver. The cunning, grateful work of art perished: the gracious deed of a loving soul endures,— is not merely one of the touching things in history, redolent in un-

speakable delicacy, but with genial influence appeals to the best spirit in man, and encourages it with the brightest hope.

Just what was that tribute?—

The silent eloquence of a heart yearning to make some expression of the obligation she felt she was under. It was a woman's way, without noise, without observation, doing as the impulse prompted, and selecting the most delicate thing to express the most delicate sentiment. She did not know anything about his burial. That was the limited interpretation which the foreboding spirit of Jesus put upon it. True enough to him, not true at all to her. He knew that in her the act had quite other cause, with her quite other significance. With her, it was a tribute of love, a love that she could not utter for a loving deed done. We all know that deeds have to come in where words fail, simplest deeds to phrase for us deepest sentiment. I put my arm about a sufferer, in joy I give a kiss; and they mean what and tell what no language can be fashioned into. Mary, or whoever the woman was, or whatever her sin had been, whatever her cause for gratitude, had received of Jesus that which drew her to him as no ordinary way would tell; and, just as frankincense and myrrh had been the costly tribute at his cradle, the things most expressive of homage and allegiance, the costly spikenard of India was made to tell of the homage and allegiance of one whose heart-sore had been healed, whose hopes raised, whose pardon given. If it were at Simon's house, as Matthew says, perhaps there was some purpose also of remedying Simon's churlish neglect. If at the house of Lazarus,

as John says, and it was the other Mary, gratitude for the life restored had its part in the offering.

Either way, any way, it was the only voice she could find for her womanly devotion and faith. Jesus turned it into consonance with his one leading thought, but no more than the apostles was she thinking of his death. The real significance of the act is in the loving gratitude, simple-hearted confidence, that, from whatever cause, lay behind and prompted it. As the odor of the oil pervaded the house, so the odor of the deed, outlasting occasion, has pervaded all time; and we have Christ's word for it that it shall pervade all time, an exhaustless centre, radiating a subtle influence forever.

There is no odor so permanent, so pervasive, as that from a good deed. It is that, the odor of loving and gracious deeds, that is the secret of Christ's power, that has made him the mighty influence he is. We are not content to take any thing about him in a natural way, but must contrive some theory grand enough to satisfy our conceptions of what should be.

We want to make God do things largely, dramatically, forgetting that he loves to work out his issues simply and by small things.

We extol the lowliness of Christ, but we forget the lowliness of the things with which Christ wrought and built. We make his gospel a gospel of dogmas: that seems worthy. It is a gospel of deeds, not of grand schemes and beliefs, but of simple doing, loving doing, the simplicity of a genial life. The influence that has gone from his life, and not the persuasiveness that has fallen from his lips, has given him his place. We put weight upon language: it is in life. We could spare

his words, golden as they are. His words alone, like the words of so many golden-lipped, would have fallen to the ground and died.

They would have established nothing, however wise and eloquent. The virtue was not in them; but the virtue lay in what he was day by day doing, the way he was living, the character he was manifesting, and the hand of help he was holding out to every manner of suffering man. So thoroughly was he pervaded by the great spirit of life that he could not help giving out life, as the flower cannot help giving out fragrance. Its perfume was in all: its fulness filled him. That was no exceptional condition which is spoken of by the Evangelist, when he felt virtue go from him. Virtue went out of him, not once alone, but always, everywhere, to all. It was always exuding, as fragrance is always exuding from the rose. The life of virtue was in him. The rose, the violet, the lily, cannot help being sweet. Life expresses itself so, because the soul of sweetness is in them. That is the language of their souls. You cannot approach them, bring them in contact with your daily lives, but this sweet thing in them comes out to meet you. No surface thing, no soon exhausted thing, but a thing in their hearts which dies only when they die. And there had been no influence in Christ's virtue, no life to it, no living, outliving odor, had it been, as so much that we call virtue is, the mere expression of superficial sentiment, the thing of spasm, or occasion. He never could have filled the world with the deathless aroma of a life, save he had had in him the deathless source of that aroma, in exhaustless supply, giving itself for each and for all. He was full him-

self, and because of his fulness filled, could not help filling.

We are all the time in life wanting to do some good, and wondering that we fail. We fail, because we are not first full of the spirit of that we want to do or give. We undertake to do when we have nothing to do from. We are dry springs, empty reservoirs. We have no fountain-head. We have never established a source of supply. We have nothing to fall back upon. We cannot pour, fill. Mere sunshine would amount to little, were there not great sunshine quality laid away in the great sun. The supply would soon go out, and leave us but an empty blank of cold and darkness; and so mere casting "sweetness and light," the power an actor or hypocrite or a very shallow person might have, amounts to little, except sweetness and light fill us. It is a stinted surface quantity, soon runs dry. It does not do much good to shed a beneficence which is the mere reflection of a surface. It must be a raying out from within deeps. Milton says of himself, "I was confirmed in this opinion, that he who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things ought himself to be a true poem; that is, a composition and pattern of the best and honorablest things." Before we can be the best and do the best, it is all important that we be ourselves filled with "sweetness and light," have the fount of them in us, more important that we be full than that we attempt to fill. We fill others by now and then accidental words and acts, kindnesses, sympathies, forbearances. We fill ourselves when we have an all-the-time spirit of beauty and truth. The outflow of that makes sure of

the good to others. Our mistake, to try to do separate acts instead of trying to get the spirit whose inevitable expression shall be these coveted things. We waste ourselves on these, and get discouraged over them, instead of striking clean and bold for the under life. The men and women whose lives are other peoples' strength or repose are not men and women seeking to do separate things at separate times, but those who have got and are filled with the life of life, who know there must be a fountain of supply, flowing by no artificial means, itself from no exhausted source. We have to get very far back, away from low things, and close against the HIGH ONE: we must be living and succulent branches of the living and true Vine. No life, no fruit, otherwise,— some promise, some show perhaps, but the fig-tree at Jerusalem gate is no more really barren than we, if our lack be the very soul of virtue. First fill yourselves with the spirit of good deed, as God first filled the great urn of the sun, and then shed abroad — then you must shed abroad — the influence of that thing which is in you, a part of your very life. Much as we may need to fill the sphere in which we move with what is best and brightest, we more need to first fill ourselves, and then we shall fill our sphere. Become sweetness and light, and we give them inevitably. Of what we are, we impart. It was all the influence Christ had, that of his *being*. Except for the grace and truth of his life, the grace and truth of his lips were nothing.

It is not the filling the house with the odor of our lives that we should think of, but the filling ourselves. And when that is done, as from the least hem-touch of

the Saviour's garments healing and strength flowed, so from the simplest speaking and doing goes out that which no man may weigh or measure, catch up or confine, but which is as the life of life,—the inextricable, invisible thread, tying into divine harmony the every part of being. Shakspere tells how far a candle throws its light, sending its central life into outlying waves of darkness, wave after wave, and transmuting with a kindly glow the ugly pall that hangs before. The good deed, he tells us, is like it; and you can many times see it stealing its quiet but conquering way, till it has suppressed the evil, and wrapped the moral darkness about it in its own garment. So the odor of that broken alabaster box stole out into the air of that home, fetid with the vapors of self-righteousness and cant, inhospitality and pride. They were all quelled before it. They could not live in its presence, must hide themselves, at least. It was no self-asserting, pungent odor, with swift breath and offence, smiting, charging, and bearing down and laying low, but pure and subtile as the night aroma of flowers is that possesses the atmosphere, you know not how, steals in and is, before you are conscious, the one spirit and power. And all those men sitting there, the honored as the tolerated guest, and the common, curious villager, felt it, were filled with it, not the house only, but they in the house. But there was an essence in that broken box. It did not greet the sense, but it found the heart. The house was filled with it; the men there were filled with it, the world has been filled with it ever since, the ages are to be, so long as ages come and go. There had been many a thing done that day in Jerusalem

homes, in the houses of the happy and the great, that won applause, and seemed to men worthy of honor and remembrance. But poetry, painting, sculpture, reverent recognition and affection, did not hasten to embalm them. Time has forgotten them. No man desired to be their chronicler. But the act of a sinning woman, who put all that she had into a costly offering, and then poured it over the feet of Jesus, the breath of the ages has taken up and whispered it to ages as they come; and nowhere that the name of Jesus goes but goes with it the sweet act of a gratitude that expressed itself in the fragrance that stole out from a broken box. To what higher significance, remembering it, may you lift the poet's well-remembered lines: —

> "You may break, you may shatter the vase, if you will,
> But the scent of the roses will hang round it still."

We want to make our lives of best service. We can only do it by fixing first attention upon ourselves. Let everything be right in us, and nothing that goes from us can be wrong. Let everything in us be sweet, and everything from us must be sweetness. In the alabaster box, the power to pervade the house with odor; in the true heart, the power to pervade life with that which, as a balm, shall soothe all hearts. We know how full the world is of bright lives and kindly deeds, and how their influence stretches away from man to man, from age to age. The odor of them fills the descending years. Men live nobler and happier because of them. With secret subtilty, they penetrate, reforming character, renewing society, driving out old miasma and pollution by their better power, disinfect-

ing the corruption and decay in which men so much content themselves to live.

In these early summer days, the air is fragrant with the breath of flowers. The blossom-laden trees shed forth their sweetness, and the lilacs and the lily distil luscious perfume to a delighted sense. Odors upon every side gladden even the waste places. The very soul of nature life speaks in them. They are the outgoings of its spirit. Just that may our lives become, odor-bearers to fill even the waste places, only will we have spirits in us,—living spirits of grace and truth and purity and love, the fount whence a never-failing outgo may bear those delicious influences which shall make the sterile hearts and lives of men what the sterile earth is before the abounding life of the sweetly scented summer.

Not a good deed anywhere, not a self-sacrificing act, not a genuine kindliness, but the odor of it, fills, delights, stimulates. Our homes are filled with the sweetness when we are true to them, our own lives and other men's lives when we carry that true living abroad with us, and make them feel it. So the great kingdom grows by little and little, so the true graces get their mastery, so the incense God loves, the fragrance of devout and earnest and growing and unselfish lives, fills the days, blesses us, and makes us sources of blessing.

June 3, 1876.

XX.

WHAT SHE COULD.

"She hath done what she could."— MARK xiv., 8.

ONLY few words these, yet how full of meaning! And, coming from a Saviour's lips, how like a beatitude, a foretaste of the "Well done!" which is God's welcome to the eternal mansions. What had she done? She had not gone to the Sanhedrim, or to Herod, pleading with her true womanliness in defence of the sainted one she felt Jesus to be. She had not defended him at Nazareth, where his neighbors and friends had forgotten themselves. She would not appeal to Cæsar in his behalf; nor in any of his perils had she stood by him. These were not her sphere. These she could not have done, had she been pure. She was an outcast; but something living, loving, and true, and pure yet, despite the taint, told her that, could she reach Jesus, she might have peace. He was at Simon's house,— perhaps the hardest place for her to enter, unless it were Simon's heart. No matter. There was a thing she could do, that a woman in her situation could best do. She had bought this costly ointment for her own adorning, to help her in the arts of her trade, to make more seductive charms fatal to herself as to others. She could pour that out on Jesus, the costliest thing, perhaps all she had. Trembling, eager,

forgetting Simon and the rest, thinking of seeing only Jesus, her impatient hands broke off the long, slender, sealed neck of the bottle, and anointed with its welcome fragrance the weary feet to which the haughty host had denied the simpler charity of water. It refreshed not the body merely, but the spirit of Jesus. Its perfume pervaded not the house only, but the breath of the ages. He did not refuse his gratitude to the sinner. She had befriended him, now he befriended her. She had outraged the sanctimonious Simon, but he had outraged the Christ; and he got rebuke such as man never had, and she got blessing. "She hath done what she could." There were not many whom Jesus praised; and yet there are a few brief and striking eulogies pronounced by him of which, perhaps, this is the briefest, the simplest, and the grandest, the most remarkable and the most complete. You remember the glowing eulogy upon John, in which there is a something nigh enthusiasm; you remember the eulogy upon Peter, in which there seems a something like overestimate of the man; you remember that upon the young lawyer, more in look and tone than language. They are all remarkable as coming from such a source,—from one who had no words of ceremony, who did not waste himself upon useless occasion, but whose every tone had a purpose, and all whose words, strong, emphatic, incisive as well as decisive, were utterances of severe truth. He did not hesitate to blame where blame was required, and as little did he hesitate to encourage, and blessed were they whose reward was his approval. One of the striking things about the Saviour was his oversetting of

values, his putting down what was high and exalting what was low. He was never dazzled by name, position, or deed, but judged everything by its own standard, and to each gave its special award, not as the world gave. The one very noticeable thing with him was the high virtue that he detected in little deeds, the strong encomium he passed on things men had never before noticed. Many widows had dropped their two mites into the treasury; but the busy men had never stopped to think that it was all their living, or to commend the charity, while they had approved the lordly gifts of lordly men, had worshipped all that made loud pretence. The kingdom of Jesus was the kingdom of circles, motives, not deeds, facts, not sounds; and so, when Mary came with her costly unguent, he read at once the sentiment which inspired it, and blessed her deed. It was not great and glittering things that Jesus asked, only of each and all what they could.

That is asking a good deal, however; and it is saying a good deal when you can say of any, "She hath done what she could." Who of us all comes up to the standard established by these words? Who exhausts the capacity in him? Who, when he lies down at night, or makes the review of life honestly, can say that there was no more he could do? We may have worked industriously, accumulated largely, got place and honor, have worn ourselves out in doing with hands or brain, while in the larger doing of the heart, in all the finer sympathies and nobler charities, in all that tests humanity and affiliates with God, we have done miserably little, it may be absolutely nothing. The duty of

doing, not great things, but what we can, is the very top and sum of human obligation. One can't get beyond it: one ought not to stop this side of it. It means the doing of everything you can, and chiefly it means the doing of things that issue out of the heart toward God and toward man. It means the setting aside of the self, and laying out one's best energies in unselfish, not to be requited, service. It means not merely occupation, industry, attainment, but noble industry, occupation, attainment; not merely busy hands, but busy affections, sympathies, purposes. You cannot sum its almost limitless significance. What one can do! — this inspired, immortal principle, which God struck out in the beginning, and eternity is to ripen, — this restless, aspiring creation, we feel ourselves to be! What we can do! Why, we put it as a child's maxim, "There's no such word as can't"; and if we believe that, and that there is such a word as *can*, if we probe and know ourselves, as we may know by probing, we shall see that there is hardly height or depth impossible to a fearless, resolved soul, owning its allegiance and feeling its accountability to God. The fact is, we do not do what we can, because we will not tax our hearts. We tax our brains, we tax our hands. We overload and wear out mind and body. But we do not treat the heart that way. There is not stress and strain of duty upon it. We are too apt to shrink from anything that is going to be a pain or a burden to it, and, instead of cultivating our sympathies, looking into distresses, visiting sick and poor, widow and fatherless, we shut off our hearts from any appeal, give a trifle, or send the suppliant on to some other hand. A minister has a grand chance

to know how much of this sending people on is done, how cheaply and how meanly sometimes people pass along to him matters they should themselves, as men, attend to; how ready other people are to think they do all they are called to, if they send people to him. As if it were any more his obligation to drop his work, take up his time, spend his money, hunting up all manner of cases, alleviating all manner of distresses! That is a duty you cannot delegate, you do not pay for. It is a duty which belongs to each. The suffering that is about us loses largely its power as a moral agent, because even the best disposed of us shrink so from seeing and knowing it, and in that shrinking learn to say, in the words James condemns, "Be ye warmed and filled," rather than ourselves seeing the hunger and knowing the cold and understanding the actual thing that suffers and asks. There could not open up a more valuable chapter of human experience to any one than that which would be revealed by the investigation of any case of suffering. It is what all ought to face themselves to, as a part of their training as brothers in the human family, part of their debt to God for his mercies. Not that every man may examine every case, but that he should not content himself with turning away, with giving a trifle, with belonging to a charity or organization, but should keep his heart warm, his charities broad, his sympathies true, by actual knowledge of what poverty and pain are, that he may know that all is not sin or shiftlessness, that he may realize how misfortunes crowd upon and multiply in some lives, and may so make himself a happier as well as wiser man. If exemption from the like will not make

him both wiser and happier, why, he is not fit to be the child of God, and cannot have great hope of the kingdom.

But this will not cover the broad demand of the phrase. Life has many spheres, many occasions, a very various demand for doing. Every man has his endowment, his ability, his talent, his gift. It is that which marks him from every other man. It is that which makes him an agent in society, in the world, in the universe. It is that which makes it possible to meet and discharge all the complicated requirements of life. How many of us do all that we can with our abilities, push them to their best results, employ them harmoniously, honestly, continuously, and so perfect not ourselves alone, but help toward the brave and better time, always coming in song and hope, always delaying in fact? Can any of us sit down calmly with himself at the end of the day, and give a searching to his day's employments, and acquit himself of some infidelity somewhere, some want of scrupulous exactness in his doing, of something undone which not only he could have done, but could have done just as well as not, and, as the school-boy used to say to me, *weller?* You will be happier, truer than I am, happier, truer than I think you, if you have never a darker curtain shutting about your day than that the night draws, if your prayers are not broken, ay, and forgotten in the rush and rebuke that conscience ministers the moment we will let the babble of world and sense hush. I think I know to what grand heights severe, exact fidelity would lead us all; how we should be as giants far on amid now impending and perhaps appalling difficulties,

treading among them as a giant treads, and working our way toward the limit-goal of our ability. I think I know how grand lives might become,—not lives grandly gifted, but ordinary lives, only were men doing just what they can, what God sent them to do, what he expects. I think I know what the napkin-folded talent might have expanded into, and how mighty the using one humble, fearlessly exerted ability might become. Great gifts have not helped the world so much as little ones thoroughly used, and humble lives lie as corner-stones beneath the grand benevolences of the world. Dig down and lay bare what years have overlaid and generations have forgotten, remove dust and rubbish and all that time has done, and expose, as men expose Pompeii and Nineveh and Jerusalem, the beginning of things, and it will amaze you to see what upholds some of the honored institutions the world could not do without. The Sunday-school system, with all its broad inclusiveness, starts from the cobbler's stall; and poor, rude, illiterate Robert Raikes, building better than he knew, creates that which follows round the world with equal pace the advancing footsteps of the gospel. Monasteries, which had their place and did their work in the civilizing, if not the Christianizing of other centuries, before they became infamous, were the labor of one man. Wesley, revolting at what he saw in the Church, and faithful to the guiding of his one conviction,—doing *what he could*, in speech, in word, in peril, and in persecution,—again, wiser than he knew, builded the great power of Protestantism, which, had it been true to his spirit, might have held in its broad embrace all Protestant power, so elastic was his system as it got

shape from him. Four million freedmen to-day, ay, and the millions more of whites who were never free from thrall till the day the shackles fell from the limbs of the slave, owe it to the one man who could not be stopped by mob, by dungeon, or by law, who fearlessly did what he could, and has lived to see a work done more gigantic and more hopeless than all which have made the fabled name of Hercules the marvel of the past. Doing what she could, a sewing-girl established a hospital for "incurables," a charity so needed, not in Boston only, but everywhere; and a single woman, born to and cradled in every luxury, doing what she can, resides at and manages and gives her time, her purse, her heart, to it, finding a mission where few would look for it, and such as surprises every one who knew her. Doing what she could, Florence Nightingale, and then the whole crowd of our own women, tender and true, threw down luxury, forgot the immunities of class and sex; on battle-fields, into hospitals, bringing a woman's hand and a woman's heart, opening the portals of Paradise before many a glaring eye, telling it to the world and leaving it written forever that tumults nor alarms, dangers nor deaths, can keep a steadfast soul away from duties; and, if you ask for the reward, I cannot show you the account God keeps, but I can show you graves, and in homes the suffering wrecks which long-wearing service, the strain on body and heart, has made.

Doing what she could in yon alleys and streets when we first tried to do something for the colored people, a sweet New England spirit of culture and grace faltered and fell; and we just laid her under the old trees

of her old home, that they might bless her before she passed away. And the colored people of this city* built her monument.

And so one might go on, culling from history, culling from experience, the brave ones who have not sat down and sighed, finding "nothing to do," time weary, life dull, but have evoked the spirit within them, and with instant and reverent duty taken that which lay near,— the thing they could do,— and have made ordinary lives rich in experiences and blessings. You, no doubt, know in homes the same things, facts never known outside of homes, lives lived only for home, yet lived out in fullest fealty to the idea of the words we consider. You no doubt know, walking these streets to-day, self-denials and activities that will outshine the pampered selfishness that passes them unheeding, as the star outshines the miner's candle or the glow-worm's light, and will glitter all over with immortality when rottenness hath seized on gold. And yet, with all that, I fear much that we are like the men in the market, standing all the day idle, not working out our salvation through the gift given us,— doing what we can,— not adorning, strengthening, ennobling the humanity in which we are partners, but pushing away the thought of obligation, and making of life only our own pleasure and profit and ease.

Friends, we want to carry into our lives a realizing sense of what this doing what we can amounts to. It is the thing we shall be gauged by, it is the thing by which we should gauge ourselves. It is just what more than one parable teaches, more than one word of Jesus

* Boston.

teaches. It is immanent, imperative necessity. It is not what we cannot do,— the impossible things men dream of in their reveries, the shadows they chase in their indolence, or the great things they waste life waiting for,— but only and simply the things we *can* do, that which takes just the time we have got, just the power we have got, just the place we have got, just the opportunity we have got, is the demand upon the place, the hour, the talent we have. We should never have had the sweet perfume of Mary's alabaster box permeating the ages with its holy aroma, had she neglected the power she had, the thing she could do, and done nothing because that was no great thing to do, because she had only an alabaster bottle of ointment, and "what was that?"

It is the appropriate thing, the thing that just fills the niche, the *keeping time up to its demands*, the *deeds up to ability*, that make ample doing and secure great reward,— not the seldom things men call great, but the multitudinous things which are just as great to God, whose value lies in their being just what God asks, which, done, shall sparkle as gems forever in the coronet God sets on the brow of them he accepts as his.

By his evening fire, the artist
Pondered o'er his secret shame:
Baffled, weary, and disheartened,
Still he mused, and dreamed of fame.

'Twas an image of the virgin
That had tasked his utmost skill;
But, alas! his fair ideal
Vanished and escaped him still.

From a distant eastern island
Had the precious word been brought:
Day and night, the anxious master
At his toil, untiring, wrought

Till, discouraged and desponding,
Sat he now in shadows deep,
And the day's humiliation
Found oblivion in sleep.

Then a voice cried, "Rise, O Master!
From the burning brand of oak
Shape the thought that stirs within thee!"
And the startled artist woke,—

Woke, and from the smoking embers
Seized and quenched the glowing wood;
And therefrom he carved an image,
And he saw that it was good.

O thou, sculptor, painter, poet!
Take this lesson to thy heart:
That is best which liest nearest,
Shape from that thy work of art.

XXI.

TIBNI AND OMRI.

"So Tibni died, and Omri reigned."—I. KINGS xvi., 22.

AFTER the revolt of the ten tribes and the establishment of the kingdom of Israel under Jeroboam, the history of both monarchies is for a long period a series of internal as well as external difficulties, until, carried into captivity by the Assyrians, the ten tribes of Israel mysteriously and wholly disappear. They seem never to have flourished after their separation; and their departure from the laws of and allegiance to Jehovah was more than that of the two tribes, the kingdom of Judah suffering mainly from the character of its kings, while in the kingdom of Israel the very institutions themselves had become so vitiated that a good king could do nothing toward bringing the people again to their allegiance. It was about fifty years after the arbitrary and insulting words of Rehoboam had sundered forever the splendid inheritance of his father, and in consequence of the assassination by Zimri of the King Elah, that Omri, who was engaged as commander of the army against the Philistines, was by the army made king, while at the same time the people at home had elected Tibni. The kingdom, rent by the contentions of these opposing factions, was plunged into a civil war, and at the end of six years

Omri prevailed, and Tibni was put to death. According to the Scripture, Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that had gone before him, and that must have been bad enough.

All that was gained to the people of Israel, under these circumstances, was a change of masters. They were not benefited in any way. Perhaps the last master was the worse.

Our lives long, we are changing masters, passing from service to service, if not from bondage to bondage. In infancy, we come under the very lowest animal wants. The immediate, unreasoning demand of the senses is then imperative. Hunger, momentary pain, sleep, the instinctive craving of our little bodies, are the ruling powers, whatever there is prophetic of the future man being but the now-and-then utterance of a better spirit which must bide its time, and for the present serve. As childhood advances, we come under the dominion of imaginations, of strange plans, vague, boundless, impossible hopes. We question, examine, have theories, try experiments. Now we are under the rule of this idea, now of that, ever busy, ever satisfied, ever changing.

We pass rapidly from one stage to another, imperceptibly, as the field of wheat does toward its ripeness. Life begins to take definite shape, opinions are imbibed which the strong man cannot shake off, habits are formed which tyrannize over us till the grave is closed. In what we more distinctively call youth, we are settling down into the service of some one thing,—one thing at a time; and we come to be distinguished, to be spoken of, to be ranked by that leading trait or

habit or ability which is felt to be characteristic, until manhood finds us established, confirmed, in moral, mental, physical habitudes, some one of which assumes the mastery, and stamps us, so as all men recognize, as its own. You do not know the man or woman whose place in life, whose functions, whose reliability, are not all based upon, gauged by, that. When you speak of another, it is as specially noted for some one thing. Other things are mentioned, while there is some one prevailing virtue or vice, strength or weakness, policy or self-interest, which enters into, shapes, controls his thought and deed, his rising and his rest.

Under all modification of time and circumstance, you see that men are, in certain points or traits, essentially the same. They remain all life through under the same service, their latest life bearing the same impress with their earliest. The mastery is first of appetite: that ripens into passion, that into habit, until habit, not a mere mastery, but a tyranny, drags its victim chained and helpless. You say of some men that they are just what they were when they were boys; and you can prophesy pretty surely of some boys what they will be when they are men. There is a fixedness that seems almost inexorable about some traits. They stick like that strange garment which caused the death of Hercules. So deep the poison they infuse into the moral system that it never recovers. While all other things within and about a man are changed, these maintain the same pitiless attitude of mastery, before whose despotic will the man crouches, abject as a slave. As an instance, I have noticed in life that a mean boy makes a mean man. It seems, usually, impossible that

it should be otherwise. I have known great radical changes in other respects; while this, as the spot of the leopard, remained unchanged, the determined under-current in all life, cropping out perpetually, and marring a character that had otherwise grown to much vigor and worth. The same thing may be said of one or two other moral qualities. They rule us to the end. This is the half of the truth: the other half is this. With all this fixedness in special, separate traits, there is a constant change in the laws which govern, the motives which influence, the purposes which shape life. We are constantly passing out of the control of one, under the control of another. Sometimes, this takes place without our noticing it. We rouse to find that, while our attention flagged or we were absorbed in something else, we have come under wholly new laws and conditions, are our old selves not at all. Sometimes, it is by deliberate effort: we make a change, because we see that we must, that life is not going right as it is. We see that we are wrong, mistaken. Life's experience and discipline bring continued dissatisfaction and disappointment, and we must change its course, or life will be a failure. But we have not courage to search far or to strike deep, to make the change radical. Self-dissatisfied amid our self-satisfaction, we will not sink the shaft of our search deep enough. We only feel the tyranny of our old master, and think that any change must be good. So we seize the thing that promises immediate relief,— as men will satisfy themselves sometimes with the immediate soothing of simples and salves, when a truer search would show that only the probe and the knife can avail. Our

growing years are years of great inward changes,—of real struggles, of deep dissatisfactions, of earnest reaching forward. Like the distracted kingdoms of Europe and of South America, so many times in history, we are throwing off the old and coming under new masteries, while the real disease under which we suffer is not touched: neither life nor liberty is secured. We break the bondage of the old only to become bondsmen to the new. We strike for freedom: it is not freedom, only change, we get. Tibni indeed dies, but then Omri reigns.

Plutarch, closing his sketch of Caius Marius, writes, "On the seventeenth day of his seventh consulship, he died, to the great joy and content of Rome, which was thereby in good hopes to be delivered from the calamity of a cruel tyranny; but in a small time they found they had only changed their old, worn-out master for another, young and vigorous, so much cruelty and savageness did his son Marius show." You will find very much the same thing said by the historian of the earlier convulsions among the half-barbarous hordes out of whose contentions at last the stable empire of England grew. And just that same human experience runs down through the ages, enters into our own personal history: we throw off an old, worn-out master only to saddle ourselves with another, young and vigorous. And so it is all the way through with man. The invalid turns from physician to physician, from allopathy to homœopathy, from regular to irregular practitioner. All the while, the secret of his disease is not touched. He has but changed his master. The disquieted in religion runs from preacher to preacher,

from sect to sect, from excitement to excitement; but the disquiet spirit in him is not soothed. He has but changed his master. The young man turns from place to place, from calling to calling; but he does not have success. He has only changed his master. Deep down, where they do not suspect, lies the secret, potent cause of all the trouble; and all these superficial applications will avail nothing. You may amuse, occupy, deceive yourselves with these changes, and, as each fails, flatter yourself that the sovereign efficacy lies with the next; but you are only chasing shadows, balking hope, insuring disaster. Often it is with us morally as with the consumptive patient. We do not detect the deep-seated, fatal malady. We only need a little this or a little that, a slight change in condition, this tonic, that opiate; while all the time the disease insidiously works at the foundations of life, and the vigor of the system is gone before the true danger is felt. Morally, we have this advantage: we can find and remove the cause of all, and come again to health, if we will.

It is this fact — that so much of our moral effort results only in a change of masters — which causes me to tremble for him who is undertaking to release himself from a bad way. The difficulty is that the man does not understand the entireness of the change required, has no just idea of the thing he must change to. The crisis of a moral change is a critical one,— critical in ways that one does not often realize. It may result to advantage: it may result in harm. It may deliver; but it may only substitute a living Omri for a dead Tibni. I am clearly of the opinion that, when one

is breaking away from one evil habit, he is more likely to embrace, to throw the old affection into some new evil form, than he is honestly, steadily, persistently to turn his back on all evil, and embrace only good. It is the special thing, the *form*, from which we think it necessary to be weaned, that definite thrall we are to break, the relative, partial freedom at which we aim, and not that absolute liberty which shall lift us above all low and contaminating masteries. We break up the habit, not the inward desire which feeds the habit: we cut off the stream, but we leave the fount to flow, to find new outlet, to push through new channels, and flood the life with fresh shames. When the evil spirit went out of the man, it was only to find seven others worse than it. One thrall was broken, but the craving for evil was not checked; and a sevenfold tyranny in the end mastered and destroyed him. And so the danger lies with all of us, that we do not so occupy the place of the exorcised evil that when it returns upon us, as all these exorcised evils will, with coaxing and promise and threat, it shall find no room, no companionship: it shall not merely find us empty of old sin, but garnished with new virtue.

That which makes the reform of any of the desperate or abandoned classes, of those who are neither desperate nor abandoned, so doubtful, is not so much the intrinsic impossibility of reform — there is no such intrinsic impossibility — as that, in reforming them or in their reform of themselves, no care is taken that the reform shall be radical, a placing under wholesome and wholly opposite influences, so preoccupying heart, hand, and soul that there shall be no time nor desire

for the old affection. They do not go to the right-about, and so fortify themselves that they cannot fall. They do not lay the axe at the root, but simply change their allegiance, substitute one form of excitement for another, lop off here a branch and there a twig, come under some other thing they consider less objectionable, grow more respectable, with the chances always strong against them that their latter state will be worse than the first. I know no experiment so hazardous as that of the man who turns from any sinful thing which has degraded him in his own sight or that of others, without a deep moral conviction, with only the purpose of making himself more respectable.

Do you know the master that this kind of respectability is,— that it is the soulless tyrant, ruling with threat and lash the multitude of men and women in religion and in life who never pass beyond its bondage into the glad liberty of the service of God? In our greater, our lesser sins, this grand mistake vitiates all our efforts. It is not absolute liberty we seek, only relative. The redemption that is nigh slips from our grasp. Reaching toward a promised freedom, we find ourselves held to another service, less galling it may be, but none the less degrading, while it may be that the silken cord of the new shall be even worse for the soul than the harsh chain of the old. The hope to improve by this sort of change, to be happier, better, under the influence of some new conditions, to become all that one ought to be by some slight, here-and-there improvement, is as fallacious as the hope that comes to the hectic cheek and the wasting lungs that under sunnier skies and balmier breezes the waste shall be

repaired and a new vigor reinstall the man. The very change may only accelerate the disease, and plunge him into a ruin this had promised to avert.

I take it that no one will deny that living in the world we do, and surrounded by influences such as surround us all, it is impossible for us to remain wholly stationary. There must be change. The soul never outgrows its pupilage, but is always under masters, always in some service. Where one ends, another begins. Tibni dies, but Omri reigns. The exchange is not always gain, but it ought always to be. Man should accept no master but such as he knows will lead him in the way of safety. Now, it is an established thing, established by experience as well as by the divine word, that under one master only is the soul safe; and the strife with every one should be to put himself under that one. "One is your master, even Christ," were the pungent words of Jesus, when he rebuked the tendency of his day to put itself under the various teachers of the law. And yet how strangely men hesitate about it! They will enter into every other service, bind themselves to any other master, wear any other livery. They will enslave themselves to that which is most degrading, to that which they know ensures death to soul and body, rather than come under obligation to the law of Christ. When men had put themselves to all other service and found no rest, then Christ came to show what was the dominion under which the soul should come. Paul recognized the truth, and gloried to enlist himself under the banner of the cross, despised and a thing of danger then, but giving him a joy and peace he had not dreamed of

at Gamaliel's feet or found amid the fascinations of Greek philosophy and art. Others, many — well known as obscure — have since known and proved that, while all other service rewards its followers with bondage, this gives a perfect liberty; yet the generations halt, hesitate, half-accept, and then fling away the offer. Stifling, vacillating, the soul now pays its homage here, now there; released from one thrall, it puts on another; cheated here, it rushes to a new delusion there, ever restless, ever changing, ever dissatisfied, yet resolutely refusing the one only thing that can give it satisfaction and rest. Do you know why it is so perverse? I do not. I can only marvel that man, so prone to seek his own comfort and good, baffled and balked in all other things, should not earlier, out of very selfishness, turn to that. Turn to it at some time he does,— too late perhaps, and only with the shrill shriek of despair, or when mid-life, sated with pleasure, or age, powerless to enjoy, accepts it, "less because it is heartily believed in and trusted than because a distrust has risen of everything else." The service of Christ then becomes more "a memorial of pardon addressed to an enemy than the guest of shelter with an eternal friend," giving but a too pungent sanction to the sneer of the atheist,— that "religion is not the hearty love of a fresh heart, but the resort of the jaded, the enervated, and the unhappy."

To avoid a disgrace like this, the taint of which must inhere in the soul, let any one so soon as he comes to the knowledge of good and evil, let any one who is breaking away from evil, put himself at once solely under the mastery of Christ. The varied vassalage

under which most lives waste may shift the burden of unrest. They cannot remove it. The children of Israel were no better off when Tibni died, for Omri reigned. It was but a change in the scourge. Under each, they were alike slaves. They had no hope. And we, so long as we merely go from the service of one pleasure, one habit, one form of excitement to another, from one degrading thing to another a little less, so long as we put ourselves under anything less than the will of God and the way of Christ, shall only change our yoke. We shall wear the collar still. Our new master may seem a little better than the old. We may be a little less at variance with God under his law. The chances are all the other way; while, so sure as there is truth, he who rejects all service but that of Jesus, seeks and puts himself resolutely under that, shall pass into that life of freedom which is the true life of the soul, and establishes that oneness with God for which the Saviour prayed, toward which all life should lead.

XXII.

SILENT BUILDING.

"And the house which King Solomon built for the Lord was built of stone, made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron, heard in the house while it was in building. So was he seven years in building it."—I. KINGS vi., 2, 7, 38.

THE idea of building a house for God seems to have come first to the mind of David, when, resting from his wars, he had brought the ark rescued from the hands of the Philistines to its proper abode on Mt. Zion. There, David had built for himself a house of cedars, adorned with regal magnificence. The nearness of the ark and its frail covering, the tabernacle, its simplicity and want of splendor compared with his own abode, seem to have forcibly struck him. "What! shall I, David, owing all that I am to the signal mercies and blessings of Jehovah, dwell in this costly house, while the ark of God dwelleth within curtains?" But God bade him desist. It was not for him to have this high privilege of erecting the first temple to the Most High. It was reserved for other more peaceful times, for another, a wiser and a purer man. Deprived by his wars and his sins of executing his purpose, David employs the remainder of his reign in making preparations for it, and solemnly enjoins it on his son

and successor to go on and effect his cherished purpose.

We can form no just conception from the description of the character and appearance of a building of materials and a method of architecture so wholly unlike anything we have been accustomed to witness. Splendid as it was for those barbaric days, it would probably strike one accustomed to the later and more exact styles as wanting in both dignity and grace. We cannot fitly arrange all that mass of material collected by David, increased by Solomon, elaborated by the cunning hand of Hiram of Tyre, or comprehend the glories of precious metals and stones in connection with it. One fact in the enumeration arrests the eye and the thought. It is that narrated in the words of the text. Here was a vast building erected, materials of brass, of stone, and of wood used, seven years was it in building, and an almost innumerable company of workmen about it, and yet never was there the sound of a hammer or an axe or any iron tool heard upon it; but its solid foundation was laid, and it grew into proportion and glory, stone above stone, rafter beside rafter, in solemn silence, as in the forest primeval the mighty tree grows, roots itself, spreads and puts on majesty and shape and power in a great and solemn silence. Imagine it, all the work done afar, and brought there, and heaved into place, while the movements and the mien of every man indicate the sacredness of the task, that busy crowd coming and going in their labor, with the reverential awe that would naturally characterize those possessed with the idea that they built a house for God, in a very different

sense from that in which we to-day use that phrase. And this continued not for a brief season, but for seven years.

That temple has passed away, and the glory and the grace and the fashion thereof have perished. The ploughshare of the foeman has passed over its foundation, and the mosque of the heathen stands in its place. It was the shrine and the pride and the hope of God's chosen people, and yet again, many think, shall on that spot rise in fairer proportions another temple, when this earth shall be the Lord's, and he shall bring again Zion. Meanwhile, another temple is building in the heart and life that are loyal to God, and that, like the first temple upon Zion, rises slowly, solemnly, silently.

"My God! slow, silent, solemn to thee!"

It is not necessary to prove that every man does, and must of necessity, build his own character. I take it to be a recognized thing that a man *is* only that which he makes himself: that whatever he is made by such external pressure and coercion as he can by no human exertion and fidelity resist is no part of himself, nothing for which he can be considered accountable.

Character is not hereditary. We have that to make, each man for himself. We may inherit talent, beauty, fortune, but character cannot be transmitted. It follows no line of descent; it obeys no law of entail; it inheres neither in blood nor estate. It is one's own individual achievement, to be begun and builded up from foundation corner to turret cap, from simplest rudiment to the full and grand proportion of a divine

completeness. Fathers and mothers and teachers, education and circumstance and nature,— these are like David and Hiram of Tyre, and the cunning workers in brass, and the hewers of stone, and the cedars upon Lebanon. They hew and prepare and bring and lay in order the material; but the soul of man is as the favored Solomon whom God had appointed to build his house, who took these materials others had carefully prepared and added to them, and himself built the temple according to the planning of a divine architect. More favored than Solomon, it is our task, after a divine plan, to raise a holier fabric, one which shall know neither deterioration nor decay.

In building, every one knows the necessity of a foundation: that it should be deeply laid, and substantial in its material. The Christian has his foundation in faith in Christ. Many suppose this is all. If they get what they consider saving faith, they rest. But, at most and best, this is only the underpinning to character. To stop there would be as senseless as it would be for an architect to stop when he had finished his cellar. Character — man's great work, that which is to distinguish him here and hereafter, now and forever — begins with the superstructure which a man places on that foundation. Having that, his great work is, in the language of an apostle, to take heed how he builds thereupon.

Next to the foundation, we know that a prerequisite to a firm, enduring fabric is exact and scrupulous attention to every minute part, however trifling and unimportant it may seem. There can be nothing complete, nothing sure, else. Men, in building houses,

often sacrifice substantial qualities to show; and, that they may attract men's eyes, much that is essential to thoroughness and security is sacrificed,— the gay, elaborate front promising a perfect edifice, and within showing slighting and slovenliness. The want of a proper admixture of sand and lime —the very humblest elements entering into the construction, which the builder seemed to think he might disregard with impunity — has in the end proved the cause of disastrous fall and ruin; and the solidity of the foundation, the beauty of the front façade, and all the elaborate chiselling of cornice and architrave and the cunning planning of the architect cannot save it. It wanted that which every joint should supply. The essential thing was that little line of white lying between brick and brick, the only thing that could be relied on to give strength and security to the whole. Its necessity was overlooked, and ruin followed. Just so it is in character. Men think, if they make a good outside show, establish a reputation for a few undeniable virtues, do a few real deeds, their characters are made, and they may fold their arms securely over the rest; and where man's eyes do not come, in the quarry of thought and opinion and motive and feeling, in the little daily detail of care and business and life, in the admixture of these slightest elements out of which character grows, they are heedless and indifferent, and leave them to be decided by circumstance or by chance. Most fatal is this. Life can have no coherence so. Its parts, its separate virtues, cannot be relied upon. Great, important, perhaps they are; but, like disjointed stones and rafters, worthless for want of that which

shall bind all together, and cause all to grow into one substantial structure.

A few isolated virtues or deeds in life, called out by circumstance or chance, do not make character; but character grows by the slow, imperceptible, silent accretion and inter-dependence of every day's humble efforts. Out of combined little, perhaps unseen, things, its vastness and its value come, as those huge rocks on which ships sometimes founder. It is these which give integrity, which supply a hope, which make it reasonable for a man to trust himself, which give security; and, in the beauty of compactness and completeness, is a far higher beauty than that of any meretricious ornament which glitters, but deceives. On this foundation, by the careful building in of the most trifling things, in work and deed, the character,— the kingdom within,— without observation, grows, slowly, little by little.

Slowly, silently, did Solomon's temple rise into the proportion and dignity of a house for God. Slowly, silently, these characters of ours emerge from weakness and chaos, from vanities and triflings and fears: slowly, silently, through each day's invisible progress, rise we into the proportion and grace of the Christian life. Weary the task, no doubt, and discouraging, as sun after sun sets, the allotted time grows less, while we detect no advance, do not see that another course has been laid. Yet the vine grows through the summer hours, though no man ever detected it; and the soul, under the full sun of a serene purpose, must unfold, never so slowly, mayhap, never so silently, yet ever so sure. It is the work of the present to toil,

have patience to wait. We gain if we do these, always be sure of that; and remember the *other* life only sees the perfectness of the house we have builded. We are never quite wise, and have to be taught again and again the old lessons.

Away back in the elder time, God had to teach the prophet that himself was not in the storm or in the earthquake; and Christ said it — how vainly – that his kingdom would not come with observation. We are always seeking signs,— as they of old,— and again and again have to learn that the living presence of the divine spirit within us comes not with sweep of storm and outpouring and demonstration, resistless as fate, but gently as the spring life comes, which is to ripen everything into the luxury and harvest of autumn. We have to learn it, and we don't learn it after all.

The greater demand of the Christian Church yet is for that access of a life in the soul which shall be manifest to sense,— immediate, abrupt, scenic, storm and tear, and physical distress, and shout or groan. Not as the holy dove dropped silently out of the clear sky upon the newly baptized Jesus, do men look now for the coming of the spirit of God, but by outward demonstration. I think God never reverses his laws. Once the way, always the way. In a great silence he comes to man, in great silence works with and within him. True life is still life, is secret life. That can't be the "Lo! here," or "Lo! there," of the street or of the house-top. It is silent growths into life that our religion demands, not spasmodic grasps at emotion. It is character which, in its highest reach, is the life of God in the soul of man, that we need to be at.

In the spring days, you are only conscious of the exquisite life that is all about you. You do not see how the petals of the rose unfold, how the violet grows, or by what subtile process it distils and scatters its perfume. Day bathes it in light, night wraps it about with shades, dews come to it, and breezes blow, and the life circulates through and through plant, flower, and tree; but silent and unseen it all goes on. You see only result. You hear no voice. So with the approach of God to the soul, so when he possesses us,— no outward manifestation, no rending, as when evil spirits go out, no toss and tumult and contention,— the exaggerations of men's device and substitution,— but God comes down and takes possession silently and makes peace in us. Silence goes hand in hand with all that is solemn and grand, abiding and beneficent. You cannot imagine a world brought out of its chaos with noise and commotion, but all things subsiding into their places beneath the potent charm of that moving spirit. There may have been noise and contention before, the rude crashing and jarring of conflicting elements; but before that presence all these fled, and order and beauty grew in silence out of disorder and confusion. All that is truly beneficent is still, moves without noise. The wrath of the thunder and the storm may sometimes go before, but the real blessing lies in the quiet sunshine that looks out upon cloud and flower after the storm has passed. And so, when the empire of old sin dies in the human breast, there may be contention, manifest, fierce; but ever the new life grows up serenely and silently, in a holiness of joy and peace the world may not meddle

with, which cannot be known by or interpreted to another.

Every one must know that his best life is his silent life; his truest growth, his silent growth. What I wear outside amounts to little. What I am, what is my life, myself, is inside; and inside is all the work done that fashions me.

The soul is not made as the statue is, with click of hammer and chip of chisel from without; but the soul is made of its own ingrowth, as a peach is. And no man shall say: "See there! It grows!" You shall see that it *has* grown: that is all. Growing, you shall not know or measure. The husbandman lies down and sleeps. He hears nothing of process, he sees nothing; but in due time he reaps. It is all a solemn silence, as is the movement of the stars. We live *out* our more evanescent pleasures, our lesser joys, all the mere surface things of every day. We show them, we talk about them: they insist on being seen and handled and heard. But when it comes to the real things, the deep things, the things that make life, that are ourselves, how silent we are! The honest moments of the soul are its voiceless moments. They have in them what is unutterable by language, what refuses to be phrased, what we never put into words to ourselves, what the innermost of us understands by that understanding which is deeper than all speech, and makes known to God in that language, in that speech, God comprehends. In the infinite silence, one is not merely alone, but in communion with the Infinite, as the high priest in the holy of holies,— nor voice, nor sound, but God, and the silence is the

dialogue of the two. Unutterable joy or sorrow, how it silences! When we are lifted to the highest rapture, when we are bowed by crushing grief, not pæan nor dirge satisfies, is craved, but silence; and in silence, growth, expansion. God and ourselves, none other. No distraction, *we* alone. Crises in spiritual being, how breathless we await their issue, with a silence so intense as almost to be audible!

New steps in faith or work,— how softly we take them, putting the foot down painfully, lest some truant echo starting from its slumbers should proclaim the fact! New experiences, new, unexpected, or long-awaited results,— how we brood over them, cherishing them as a parent bird, with protecting wings and a fond gentleness! Our prayers, our purposes, our doubts, our strifes, our days of darkness, our hours of light, our conquests, our defeats, the glow of hope, the bitterness of fear,— who knows them save Him whose eye looks down in secret upon us? Not the friend clasped closest to our bosoms dreams of all the alternating life which goes on within the seclusion and silence of the soul, and is weaving into proportion that thing we shall be. Our truest moments, moments of realest fealty to principle, be they joyous or sad, we cannot share. No word comes up from the deep fountain to give a just significance to them. The word is not coined that could. Only the Infinite, going down under speech and understanding everything, comprehends.

And no one knows the amount and the worth of the quiet lives that are grown into, all the time right about us, who do their duty, have their trials, bear their bur-

dens, make their growths, yet give no sign, unless at some crisis moment when the ripe result surprises. How little do they who only see results — who, perhaps, will not even notice them — realize the process and the cost of growth, through what silent agonies, what resolute bearing we have come up, the price we have paid for our power or our peace! Robertson says in one of his letters: "How little we know one another's bitternesses! How little we suspect the hours of secret agony and cold struggle that every earnest, living heart has to go through in this most unintelligible world! To be where we and those around us are living in two different worlds of feeling is tenfold more intolerable than to be where a foreign language, not one word of which we understand, is spoken all day long." And yet it is by just these things we get our best growths, our true grapple, sinew, and power. These secret, sacred, silent struggles are they which lift us above the low average of man stature, and give us proportions that ally us with God. Shall we not accept the conditions for the sake of the product? This life — the best of it, the best use and the best end — is to ripen toward God; and, as the fruit could not ripen for us were it all sunshine, no more can we ripen for him except through some dark, some storm, some anxiety, some doubt, some cross. And, if it took the thirty years of Nazareth to grow the Christ of the Jordan and the wilderness, shall we repine at the years that it takes to grow the Christ-life in us, which shall make us at our Jordans and our wildernesses such as he? The familiar hymn has it,—

> "In secret silence of the mind
> My heaven and there my God I find."

And the other truth — I do not say the more important truth — is that it is there that one finds self; and no true gain is made in living until the self be found.

How often in life we detect in others, by some sudden revealing, the extent and the result of this silent life! Some circumstance — it is quite apt to be some reverse, sickness, misfortune, disappointment — suddenly opens up to you the fact that some one at your side, unsuspected of you, has grown into a great moral strength. That calm, sustained life is revealed now: that inner fabric is beautiful and complete; and the graces you had loved as fitting ornaments to such a spirit are found resting upon, and in turn upholding, the more solid and substantial portions of character.

I remember one of those lovely ones everybody loves to look at,— child of luxury and fashion, flattered, caressed, adored, all bright before her, and much good apparently for many years in store,— suddenly was laid upon a bed of suffering, and told that she must die. There was the greatest interest in her fate, and a corresponding desire to know in what spirit she would meet it; for she had seemed to live for the world, absorbed in the gayeties which her position and her powers gathered around her. Others said she was too beautiful to die; but, when the truth was told her, in sweetest resignation and holiest confidence she heard it, and said that never in all that fevered life she had led had she forgotten that. She had made God her friend, in her sphere had done her duty silently. While all eyes gazed upon her, and many envied the brilliancy of her career, she was working upon a temple of God in her own heart, setting it in order that it

might become a meet residence for him. It was a most striking instance of a not uncommon fact,—one which the lifted veil of history sometimes shows us, one which we may often meet with in life, teaching us, when we are tempted to doubt or condemn because we cannot see, that there are deep things in human hearts and human experiences,—too deep for the plummet of moral fallibility to fathom,—that the deeper the spirit life in many bosoms, the less the noise and show.

Slowly, with a solemn sense of the magnitude of his task, man toils at the temple he is to build and dedicate to God,—the temple of a pure heart and a perfect life. There may be noise in removing the rubbish of an old carnal being in order that the foundations may be laid; but, as it rises into sight and shape, the sound of no hammer or axe or any tool is heard therein. As they who labored upon Zion went with bended heads and reverent air and silent steps, bearing the material and laying it in place, so we reverently and silently build up within a temple to the Lord,—a temple fitly framed together, goodlier than that of the wise king, in which the Lord shall dwell, not as in mystery between the cherubim or in the veiled secrecy of the holiest place, but as he loves to dwell ever,—in open communion with his children.

Herein lies a great truth. We are builders of our own characters. We have different positions, spheres, capacities, privileges, different work to do in the world, different temporal fabrics to raise; but we are all alike in this,—all are architects of fate.

XXIII.

JOHN, JESUS, AND PAUL.

"John the Baptist, preaching in the willderness."— MATT. iii., 1.
"Jesus Christ, the Son of God."— MARK i., 1.
"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ."— II. COR. i., 1.

WHEN I see what is the ordinary paucity of manhood; how seldom one in a generation or a century really outsteps his peers; how uniform, low, dull, is the average,— it is a marvel to me — and a marvel that ever grows — that one and the same generation, one and the same race, and under very adverse circumstance (except that adverse circumstance is the real cause, and of the best), should have produced three such men as the Baptist, Jesus, and Paul. There is a great deal perplexing about our gospel history, almost it perplexes more than it clears; but in nothing am I more perplexed than this, that the gospel should have had, at its early starting, three such advocates,— more, that it should have needed them. I may get some idea of the necessity of a forerunner, but it is a puzzle that grows to more and more why there was any need of an afterrunner. I can see what he did, what Christianity would soon have become but for him, as well as what it has become through him; but why there should have been that work to do, why a man who had never seen or known Jesus should be the man to do it, is ever a perplexity, and ever will be.

Let us see something of these three men, minds, potential influences,—these very variant men with so variant work and method,—and let us see if we can arrange to ourselves the separate and well-divided parts which they had in the great drama.

But let me first say that John and Paul were great men. I see no signs of greatness anywhere among the original twelve, not one of them men of mark; very ordinary men, even the three best known; men well enough for every day, but evidently no way great men, not crisis men, not men on whom affairs turn, not men to lead ages or guide opinion; men not of the calibre needed when times are changing, thought moulding, action prospering; not one of them a man of power in brain or character,— Peter, bold enough, but not reliable, hot-headed, unbalanced, bigoted, and seeing only narrowly; John, timid, effeminate, a man to lean on Jesus' bosom, not to lead in Jesus' work; James and the rest hardly more than names to us to-day.

But John the Baptist and Paul are really men. They are the true workers and the true heroes: they have power and character,—men to have made their mark anywhere, at any time, in any genuine work; men to admire and respect, fitting well into the niche they occupy, and leaving behind a personality which the world will always recognize; the one receding at the advent of the greater one whose herald voice alone he is, the other pushing himself well forward, taking the aggressive, following after the great one, boasting of himself in Christ, as zealously as the other timidly declared himself unworthy to unloose his shoe-latchet; the one filled with a sturdy, unenthusiastic, prosaic pur-

pose of duty, the other filled with a quickened spirit, which led him among unseen things, snatching him beyond the prosaic, and inspiring him with a kindling enthusiasm to burn all through his own time, and to make every reader in every age tingle with its unfailing influence.

The Baptist was personally known to Jesus. If they had not been brought up together,— as legend and art would seem to suggest,— in education they must have been similar; and with the general purport of the mission of Jesus John must have been familiar, though it is amply evident that the last and greatest of the prophets had no real idea of what his mission shadowed. He was Jew of the Jews. Not a touch of the Christian about him. His the spirit of the prophets only,— men from whom he legitimately descended, in thought and dress and method. He is a man of the Decalogue. No breath from the mount of the Beatitudes had touched, refreshed, fructified his spirit. Of the old and the past was he, a lingerer in that twilight that closes a night and preludes a day, a man of backward look, who hoped for a renewed Israel, but never knew one pulsing hope of the coming kingdom,— last, best, greatest of prophets, less than the least of the kingdom of God. He closes the long and honored line of gifted men who had, through the many centuries of misfortune and misrule, made luminous the pages of Jewish history, and who, from time to time, like stars upon a stormy sky, had shone out clear and strong, proclaiming the survival of the better spirit, renewing the hope that, at some time, a better day would come. The better day was come. John was its herald, but

the opening was neither to be seen nor to be forwarded by him. Like another Moses, he was to die at the threshold, not to pass over and possess.

It was his unique felicity to have pronounced upon him such eulogy as never had fallen from human lips. Jesus was not chary of commendation. It was one of his graces that he spoke soothing words wherever he saw honest purpose. What words approach that heartfelt benediction which, if his disciples bore faithfully back to his lone prison, must have been sweetest solace for many a bitter hour. It is like a "Well done!" from God. It puts the Baptist by himself: it stands him high, and separates him from all other men. And what ourselves we knew of him confirms the eulogy. He called himself a voice, and he was that,— and not only that, not a voice out of cities and cultures, but a voice out of the wilderness, rousing the people, as the voice out of the cloud precedes the storm. He was an old-time prophet, apart from men, save as he had a message to bring. But he was more. None of his old-time predecessors — the grand men of the gray past — to stand by his side. Not the place he held, not the work he did, but the man, a marvel. He was no part of a machine or of a drama, not merely a sharp, warning cry, but, with all his rough exterior and strange uncouthness and solitude of spirit, a rarely lovable man, who would have repelled by his raiment, but won by his heart. The tender consideration that he had for Jesus; the unselfish way in which he thrust himself aside; the calmness of his rebuke to his excited disciples; the modesty with which he declared his own decrease; the willingness that Christ should

grow,—all these rare qualities are the qualities indicative of a rare soul. One of them almost enough, many would think, but all bound up in one, making a rare whole one rarely sees. It requires a large, full nature, a sublime unjealousy, great self-control, and great fidelity and genuine largeness, to yield one's own individual place, work, repute, to fall back, to consent that one's self and all one has done shall fade, be forgotten, sunk into oblivion, while another takes the honors; to see a thing you have initiated, toiled for, risked all for, been defeated in, go on to its success through another. To feel warmly toward, welcome, approve, rejoice in, and indorse that other unqualifiedly, is a virtue few of us reach up to. Yet this is just what that man did, and did, apparently, without hesitancy or demur. He had that hard form of trial, —to see his disciples leave him and follow another, —a thing which philosopher, teacher, preacher, never faces but it cuts deep. Yet his great nature met it and rose above it. The Christ was the worthier. That settled it. No personal ends or hopes should stand between. His very shoe-latchet was too sacred a thing for him to touch. Without apparently knowing what, he did know that the Christ brought other and more truth than he. He was but the dawn, the Christ should be the full sun. He was but the voice, Christ should be the life. He but prepared the way, but the Christ with beautiful steps should show it. It is a superb magnanimity in him, unconscious as a child. A child he was, bred in deserts, and unused to the diplomacies of men, but with all rugged manliness and generosity, standing out perhaps from his

torture-house, his one querulous or doubting inquiry,— as who would not who felt that the great movement himself had proclaimed halted under the hands of the very man ordained to push it to its success?

His the least pronounced work of the three, as from his position was inevitable,— the closing, the concluding, of the most magnificent epoch that any nation has presented; for in true greatness there is in history nothing anywhere to stand beside the history of the descendants of Abraham,— not specially great in arms, traffic, commerce, art, or man, but great in the fundamental and broad principles which underlie the national morality, religion, and life. And, as Jesus showed, it was a grand culmination in his single person. He stands wreathed with the immortal chaplet of approval Jesus wove and placed upon his memory. The great prophetic caste closes and is crowned in him.

What shall I say of that other name before all other names, man above all other men, whom centuries and languages have been talking about and extolling, without beginning really to give us the full glory that shines out in his matchless manhood? Brains have been busy conceiving and tongues busy proclaiming him; but just what that life was, the crude outlines of which meet us in the evangelic page, none have yet succeeded in telling. And honest difference vibrates all the way between the extremes of opinion, making him God on the one hand and a very mistaken man on the other. Under either extreme, we have one sure thing, —a grand personality, a life, a power, that got itself into the world's experience, and changed the current of the world's flow. How to get at the pith and marrow of

that personality ; how to conceive and present it; how to make it, to one's own soul, the vital, inspiring energy ; how to weave these few broken incidents into a unique and satisfactory whole ; and how to clothe the skeleton they present in all the glow of life,— is the great inquiry, the great desire, indeed it is the great need. I take it that to-day the Christian cause has no more pressing need than just this of an adequate conception and portrayal of the Christ. Much thought has been turned that way ; and men of practised skill, as men of journey-work, have tried their hand at it, and we have many lives of Jesus attempted. Mostly from the extreme of Renan on the one hand to the extreme of the extremest orthodox literalist on the other,— they strike you as not so much attempting to develop a life as attempting to bolster a theory. Too much art confronts you, and the dear simplicity of truth is wanting. As in the ages only at rare intervals does the genius of painter or sculptor assert itself, leaving behind it lineaments touched as with some other than the ordinarily human power, so only is it at intervals that a master mind attempts the rarer and grander work of bringing the deepest thought out to man. And I suppose we have got to wait till all things shall consent to the moulding of the mind which can grasp in harmonious whole the disjointed, in some instances contradictory, in many cases the perplexing, fragments of the Messiah's life, group and grade and subdue them into proportion and place, and then give us such an impersonation as man must say, "'Ecce Homo,'— This indeed is he." There are approximations to this already, signs of a coming! Many men have done well in greater or lesser part,—

men of the broader school in Germany, England, in this country,—who you feel have advanced the whole matter beyond the stiff and stark presentation of creed; and, for an effigy called Christ, have substituted a more human and living being. Still, we wait; and that wonder of all time no man satisfactorily conceives or delineates.

It does not need that I repeat the wondrous story,—how a young man, low-born, child of a carpenter of Nazareth of Galilee, himself of that same craft, came in the might of a great spirit and under the benediction of the opening heavens, and set himself to make men see how, not as men had thought, but in a deeper spirit, he was the prophet who was to come. Without noise or observation, save such as tender words and loving looks and the gracious carriage of his life called out, he spent a few, active, harassed months, and denied by one friend, betrayed by another, deserted by all, died a death of ignominious agony; and, when he has gone away, you feel that there is a change in life. You sum it up, and you feel there is not a thing in it history would care to save, not an incident it would select to transfer to its pages. And yet at once you say, as you close the record, "What a life was that!" And, whenever you recur to it, that thought comes first, last, always prominent. The fresh reading he gave to old truths, the new things he told us of God and duty, are there; but first and always is his life, with its life-giving power. And, that he knew the secret of life, all we know who have ourselves lived. When we get into human experience and strait, and go to man, to philosophies, they fail; when we turn to ourselves, we fail; to what nature says of God, it fails; while the turning

to Jesus, ultimately, if we are honestly true, brings to us, out of his life, the guiding, the teaching, the support we need. The one striking thing about Jesus is that, apart from his mere teaching, he never lost his sweetness, as philanthropists, men who put themselves forward as social and moral and religious leaders, so almost invariably do. We find it that the pressure and conflict sour and harden, make irascible and unjust, vindictive and termagant. On their reformatory side, repulsive, how sweet soever in all else. Jesus was altogether lovely, and the same to the end. He never let his own sufferings or non-success, other men's oppositions or hates, interfere with his single purpose, with the sweet tenderness of his spirit. Smite him on the cheek, deride him, betray him, take up stones to stone him, crucify him, misunderstand, desert, ridicule, scoff at him, he never moves from that one temper. Amid all, he pursues his even course, calm as the mid-day sun, and conquers as he seems to fail. The light that he brought by his word is fully equalled by the sweetness he showed in his life,— the one no richer legacy than the other, himself the centre of an influence not yet felt as it should be, but yet — who can doubt? — mightily to prevail.

I never know exactly what to say or think of Paul, as unique a character as either of the others, the first man who had caught the Christ spirit and fire, the real baptism of the Holy Ghost, as John had been the last man who had lived after the prophets, was himself the uttermost of their teachings and hope. As John bridges the chasm between the prophet and the Christ, so Paul bridges the chasm between the Christ

and the Christian. On the one side Jesus teaches the Baptist, on the other the great apostle. He was the only one of them who had any culture,—a man of refinement, letters, society, though I have doubts if he is to be considered as the finished scholar many would have him. Evidently a somewhat scholar, more evidently is he a man of affairs, who loves power and place, to lead, to rule, to force; quick to conceive, bold to perform, tenacious of purpose as of principle, a torrent or tornado swiftly striking at the point he would make, regardless of bearing down all intervening obstacle; politic, plausible, ingenious in treating a topic or dealing with men, his policy sometimes overriding the moral courage which marks his usual conduct; fearless before a foe, a mob, the Jewish hierarchy, or the Roman law; of a matchless, womanly tenderness, a quick, full sympathy, and a certain delicate, courtly friendliness, never forgetting his salutes at the end of the most hurried or impassioned epistle, to older or younger, lower or higher, any who might have just reason to be remembered or might be hurt by forgetfulness. I think what we call distinctively the Christian graces first began to take shape in him, and have left us the figure of a man animate with whatever trait we most desire to find or rejoice in in the best manhood. It was no easy thing for one so full of passion, of so impetuous impulses, to calm himself from the ruthless bigot and persecutor to the man of so eager and deep affection and self-forgetting service; to pass from the rooted narrowness of the straitest Pharisee to the perfect liberty of a son of God; to see how utterly the spirit of Jesus demanded not merely the obliteration of all Jewish rit-

ual, but of mere Jewish morality and putting away of the old man after Moses, as well as after sin, and the putting on of the new man, which should only and utterly be after Christ. Whether you take him as in council with the Christian college at Jerusalem, or before the culture of Athens, or at the bar of Agrippa, or disputing with and parting from Peter, or hurrying through long journeys to bring aid to feeble churches, or inditing elaborate epistles to wayward churches, exhorting, rebuking, commending, or standing before the high priest, or reassuring frightened sailors, or instructing Timothy, his loving friend,—in every position, under whatever stress or disadvantage, you feel the man equal to the occasion, as if he were set aside for just the one immediate purpose,—a military commander, a courtier, an orator, a bishop of churches, a giver of law, a leader of forlorn hope; brusque, exacting, tender, imperious, submissive; a man to cower before, to take to your heart; to plan and to carry out; a man of affairs, and a man of so sublime a spirit of devotion and self-abnegation as to confess of himself that he really did not know whether he was in the flesh or out of it, blending the common-sense of every day with the ecstatic vision of a devotee. So compact and sinewy every way, so morally and spiritually gigantic, that of yourself you figure him a model of physical perfectness, and it is with a shock of incongruity that you are told that these traits attach to no Colossus, but are associated with a contemptible, personal presence, waned by some distressing and always obtrusive physical lack; shamed by its presence, yet but the more, because of it, abounding in all desirable virtue. One sees specks in

the sun, and easily you may find motes, flaws in him, but, take him for all in all, a man for the world to wait long before it shall produce his mate; the man who saved Christianity to the world almost at the cost of the Christ, through whose fiery conception and rhetoric men have rather been moulded than by the gentler words of Jesus; the man militant, who set in array the gospel against the serried ranks of both Judaism and heathenism, and, as the old Highland warrior with claymore in hand, hewed a way for the truth, or a Cœur de Leon with swinging battle-axe struck to the death what hierarch or dynasty opposed him. Crusader, knight-errant, troubadour, he entered the lists against all comers, bore down all opposers; and not David, by his casement on Zion, sung to the night heavens more devoutly than he poured the rich deeps of his heaven-touched spirit into his letters, some of whose passages are unmatched for tender sublimity of sentiment, and lift the man of a keen and remorseless logic into the highest realms of delicate, poetic conception and expression, and a singer of the soul's sweetest things,— faith and trust and love and yearning,— as well as David, while his thought, touched to higher issue by other faith, leads us where David never essayed, among experiences David never knew. You may recall passages which should fairly entitle him to the claim of the first singer of Christian sweetness,— to our religion, what David was to the Jewish faith.

A marvellous trio surely, to have been men of the same country and the same generation,— men so unlike, yet combining upon one work, each a lively stone in the new edifice which was to rise sublimer and more

enduring than Solomon's temple, in whose service of sacrifice and faith all nations were to join, and hallelujahs from all discordant tongues to blend in one grand, harmonizing choral to God, who not so much of all blood made all peoples as purposes that they all be of one faith.

And so we well see how, in God's plans, divine harmonies work themselves out through seemingly contending discords. Three so unlike men, differing in themselves and in gift, inaugurate a new mission to the human soul. The hair shirt and the locusts and the solitary life and the ascetic mood and the shrill cry precede Him whose feet, shod with glad tidings, make beautiful the way amid sin, sickness, and sorrow, bringing peace and quiet and hope; while he who will not cry aloud himself precedes, the spirit militant, the Charles Martel, before whose sturdy blows you hear the crash of falling gods, while the wail of their devotees is covered and quelled by the jubilant shouts of conquest and the pæans that lift themselves as the truth in Jesus makes its glorious way. Forerunner and successor do their faithful work. John prepares, Jesus tells it all with holy lips and holy life, Paul follows and applies. John breaks up the ground, Jesus casts in the seed, Paul covers it in. The blade has sprung, and the nations wait and toil for the coming of the full corn in the ear, the precursor and prophecy of the harvest.

March 16, 1879.

XXIV.

LIFE'S BROOK-SIDES.

"The brook in the way."— PSALM cx., 7.

A BROOK is a stream of living, running water, born among the hills or of unseen springs in meadows. It has a life all its own; and in its moods, its wanderings, its rise and flow, and end, it epitomizes the life all lead. Born tiny and helpless, it pushes itself and grows by pushing; it dances and gurgles and sparkles, is bright and glad; it is surly and clouded and impetuous and mischievous; it is parched and shrunken; it creeps along under rocks, quiet and deep; it dashes over rocks, shallow and noisy; it sleeps under the shadow of trees its own moisture has created; and it sweeps grandly into the broad glare of the sun. It is shy, it is bold, it is a joy, it is a fear, a thing of beauty, mayhap a thing of terror, in bounds a blessing, out of bounds a horror and a curse; and that is pretty much what man is.

Up among the hills, away off from man, where only winds and bird notes and snapping twigs break the silence, how one welcomes the voice of a brook, and leaves his way to follow its calling! What a joy it is, —the fall from rock to rock, the white glitter as it washes down the precipice, the dash and leap, the laugh, the prattle! A wild, untamed thing of beauty

and of solitude, it fascinates the man of civilization, who, somehow, never gets beyond, away from, the admiration and the craving for pure, simple, untutored nature.

Nor only when a wild thing of solitudes, to be sought and enjoyed alone in off hours, but the brook in our way, crossing our daily paths. It adds to the picture of the landscape: none is perfect without it. It groups and feeds trees, and drapes them as no upland can; it twists and winds itself in and out, a sparkling ribbon on a verdant field; it breaks the monotony of other beauty by its own, fills in and fills out, completes the scene. A meadow with a brook in it and a meadow without, what unlike things!

More than beautiful, the brook in the way is a thing of delightsome memory to those of us whose thought runs back to school-boy days, of skipping stones, and wading, and tempting fish with pin and worms,—a joy old Izaak Walton never knew,—who have, through long summer hours, teased some sober, reverend minnow, beneath the cool shadow of a rock, in whose head was cunning too subtle for our shallow craft, or have stooped just as far as we dared, and a good deal farther than was safe, over the brink, that the school-girl at our side should have the elderberry or flower she admired, or, in less amorous venture, the bird's nest ourselves coveted; whose later years, loitering or lying on the ground, have gazed in lazy wistfulness at sparkling waters whirling away, and ever-repeated eddies, while the subdued melody filled not ear only, but the heart with that lotus-like oblivion into which no voice nor language obtrudes, from whose restfulness one rouses

sharply and shakes himself again, before he can quite take up the burden and the staff.

More than a beauty or a memory, the brook in the way is a refreshing, not to eye and ear alone, but to weary feet and heated brow and swollen hands and parching lips of the wayfarer. In the true travel days, what a god-send to the lagging horse a wayside brook! And how he stood, and stood, and drew in huge sighs of comfort, and drank with all the measured tasting of the water that the connoisseur gives his wine, with muzzle well plunged, and dilated nostril and twinkling eye and restless ear and quivering frame, the whole dumb eloquence of grateful satisfaction, needing some coaxing before he could bring himself to feel again the bearings and stress of his load and the tedium of the hot and dusty way. And, when the summer noon is hot and sluggish, nature takes her siesta, the cows stand deep in the running water, chewing the cud in measured cadence, and with lazy monotony switching the tail, so wise, so mute, so comfortable! Among the hills or over beyond the fences, in meadow or woods, or by the roadside or across the way, to beast, to men, a grateful blessing is the brook.

And so the brook is a picture, a synonyme, a just figure of speech, of restful pleasure, of genial beauty and refreshing. It crosses dry and arid highways, and they lose their uninteresting tameness. We rest beside them, or we take fresh courage for our way, as we cross them.

In the journey of life, our ways are crossed by brooks; that is, to our weary feet and heavy eyes and worried heads, in the dull monotony of duty and of

being, there come refreshing places,— not nooks and dells and loitering places, but places of flowing water, crossing our paths, oftentimes in unexpected places. We are too apt not to see that these are brooks, alive with nourishment for us. We call them something else, and get some other teaching from them. It depends a good deal upon the names we give things, what is the manner of effect they produce upon us. And we go on in life, giving things wrong names or unwise names, receiving wrong or unwise impressions; and mostly the wrong names and impressions are bad, and not good. Why should we make all halts in life into glooms, and every tryst of the soul a sadness? Why make the things that strike across our path into checks, barriers, thwartings, disappointments,— hardness of fate to ourselves or others,— flaws, chasms, gulfs, or, if we be sometimes led up to things which are really these, why not see how many times it is that which crosses our way is a brook, living and limpid with its refreshing?

Here is the going of the old year, the coming of the new. Why not think of it as a brook crossing pleasantly the pathway of our pilgrimage,— not a dark, depressing, lugubrious thing, but a thing bright with beauty and with joy? Very much we are made to feel as if it were a portentous and unpleasant something that yawns before our feet, as we cross the wholly artificial barrier which separates two calendar years. The people who pray and weep and sob, and call up memories, and drape with funereal glooms the departing hours in their own secret chambers, or those in more public exhibitions of the watch-meeting, even those who spend the hours in frolic, and salute the new

year, as the new king is saluted before the old is well gone,— carry over into the new, deeper down than superficial salutation or gift, a secret weariness, an ill-defined dissatisfaction, a teasing restlessness, because of movements and monitions of the within man, rebuking and haunting and discomforting. We are rather rasped by pulpit and by monitor and by conscience urging us to look at the past, and bring it up in sharp contrast with what should have been,— the warning as to the future, and imperative with the urgency of *the now.* It is a dark line drawn across our way, a deep ditch, a gulf fixed,— on one side one eternity, on the other side another. There is too much demand for the gloom about it, as if here were a halt,— the soul must call for introspection and contrition and self-weighing and measurement. Whatever we may throw into tone and gift, into salutation and occasion, it is rather a cheerless time we have of it inside, that we think we ought to have. Let it be these self-considerations in some wholesome sort, nothing exaggerated, morbid, purely occasional, and then let the crossing the meridian be as the crossing a brook in one's way,— encouragement, stimulant, refreshing, sending us forward on our journey.

And this season ought to be that. Do you suppose God delights in lead colors,— in the bowed heads, in the perturbed spirits, in the long faces, and the dreary hearts? He has no taste for glooms. The only thing he has made black he has hidden away from sight, and has ordained it should minister light and heat and joy. Do you believe that discipline and experience — the hard times and the hard lots which we more complain of

than have — are the unrelieved things we make them by the aid of theology and our own selfishness? Are there not more times of refreshing than of repressing in the average human lot, more brooks in the way than ditches or gulfs? It is a thing to be remembered that we cross the threshold of another year; but shall I only think of my sins and my shortcomings, count up my losses, renew my sorrows, and re-shed my tears? Shall I not also think of my hopes, my great opportunities, and my advance? Shall I say in my greeting, "I wish you a happy New Year," and yet feel in my soul, a good deal uncomfortably, that I ought not to make it a happy day to myself,— but a time of mortification and penance, a river of Babylon and my harp upon the willows, rather than a brook in my way, suggestive of elastic life and hope and a great beyond joy of ever-increasing power and broadening expanse, ere it shall empty the full volume of its waters in the waiting sea?

We do not take refreshing enough. I do not mean mere holiday, but a better rest, a truer strengthening. We keep ourselves in the worry and fret of life. We see things as blanks, as barriers, not as brooks; as disturbances, not as helps; as hindrances, not as profits. We never take off harness. We unyoke the ox, we strip and rub down the horse, we let out for his run the cosseted dog; but we do not take off the harness from self, strip and rub and give it a run,— no genuine seasons of refreshing. People used to run through a life of every indulgence, and then go and shut themselves up in convents or hermitages, and make it all square. A people jaded nowadays with the world's wear snatch

little occasions for dainty penance and seclusion, and try to make the soul's refreshing out of restrictions, as if that were the best way to serve God.

> "Shall fasts and penance reconcile
> Thy favor, and obtain thy smile?"

the hymn asks; and the old prophet sternly says: "Incense is an abomination unto me I cannot away with. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to me?" And the other prophet grandly asks, "What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God?"

Morally, existence is with us a penance, a task-work of God imposed upon us, worse than an Egyptian or American slavery. We do not recognize or will not stop at the brooks which cross our way; or, if we cross them, we lap, as the men of Gideon, and rush on, instead of cooling our limbs and quenching our thirst by generous draughts, and getting the inspiration of fresh courage for fresh travel.

All this is wrong, and making life into something God did not ordain. It is easy enough to see the earth-face all gashed and seamed with ravines and earthquake foot-prints and ragged steps of torrents and glaciers, torn and rent and distorted by avalanche and whirlwind, barren with desert sand and mountain precipice; and so it is easy enough to see human life all defaced by scars of misery and ignorance and want and suffering and woe, to dwell upon the shadows and mishaps of our own lives. But the earth-face is better; and human life is not what we paint, when we paint it in the shadows and paint out the light. There were those, the Psalmist said, who, passing through the val-

ley of Baca, made it a well; and Baca was "a stony place where there was no water and no herbage and no trees." They made the dull, dreary place beautiful with life.

There are those passing through life who make it a Baca, a stony place "where there is no water, no trees, no herbage"; and again, others passing the same way, and under similar circumstances, make it glad in springs of renewing water, welling up from all manner of hidden places, and pouring themselves out in streams to refresh parched places, and make the very deserts of life to blossom.

And it takes so little to do this, only one has the true spirit! It is amazing,— the little things that give great refreshing, the constant need we all stand in of other people's kindness, courage, or faith, brightness in word and deed, and at how small an outlay from them is a great blessing to us, how small outlay from us might give great refreshing to them. Whatever we may make the pathway of childhood, the broad road of maturer life is apt to be dry and dusty, and heavy with burden, to lack refreshing watercourses. We all get so earnestly into the "struggle for existence," so much of one's own success is by the pulling down of another, — your gain, somebody's loss,— that the charity of Paul, "the enthusiasm for humanity," gets mighty little chance with us.

We are contestants for a prize, and it is not merely things, but men, that are in our way, that we must get one side. Despite us, the sweetness goes from us; and we get hard and inconsiderate and selfish,—at any rate, thoughtless. When I recall the heartiness of a simpler

time, as we still find it among the poor, I but feel that the advantage of civilization and culture is purchased at loss of the finer thing we should be. Culture and civilization make us critical; and to be critical is soon to be captious, if not cynic. Everything reduces itself to criticism in our day. We are nothing except we are critical; and criticism, to be criticism, must be destructive, if not detractive. We criticise; that is, pick flaws in, find fault with. One suspects his neighbor of having no real opinion, unless he takes exception. Art and books, sermons, and all manner of work, and men, are handled a good deal by a cold or cutting measurement, by an arbitrary standard, rather than by a generous valuing at their best, putting in best light. It is only now and then, in our present and self-absorbed lives, that a man feels he has hospitality at the hands of his fellows, a fair show. It is the "outs" about him that are marked and re-marked. And so we journey, chafed and sore and alone,— not, as they tell us, men journeyed in the old caravan time, when the missing Christ child could be supposed among friends, but as solitary pilgrims, each eager for his own goal, leaving others to their own mishaps. And yet so little a thing might change all that! It would be so easy to turn a brook, with its cheer and refreshing, right across the way. There came to me a little rill out of a human heart, a thoughtful deed and a tender word, when I was parched and weary and desponding, and feeling it were better to give it all up, the odds were so great, the struggle too hard, the bearing down of human opposing and detraction too heavy; and it trickled and bubbled, and sang and laughed, and dropped down

into my heart, and percolated through weariness, and faint-heartedness, and cheered and braced, reconciled and encouraged my wilting manhood. And every manner of hope sprang by it, with every beauty of blossom; and I, too, sang, and the way was all changed, the day made light, the way desirable and even enviable, the dust and the heat, the burden and distance, forgotten. And nothing seemed impossible, and everything acceptable; and the whole soul went upward, and the whole heart outward,— the one God-ward, the other man-ward.

Every one knows that the great encouragements in life and the great helps that come to him come just that way,— that herein is life's refreshing, its needed, its available helps. I know men who have, all through life, made the mistake of waiting for other people to wait on them. They only disappoint themselves, and really do nothing broad and valuable. What we want is not the lift, which shall prevent our bearing the load, but the cheer which shall help us along, and make us feel that our load is not so heavy after all, which shall send us back to our burden again, the way of our duty, with cheery feelings of that courage which comes from the least expression of appreciation or good-will. It is *un*appreciation which makes the large part of the heaviness of life. We more waste under it and grow more and more hopeless than under positive opposition. To carry an honest self-consciousness — which is no conceit — of real integrity and ability and desert, to find it never acknowledged even negatively, or more than vaguely doubted, more depresses than much other that is more pronounced. We need the brooks

in the way, the cheering and refreshing. And these not the divine beneficence alone can send. They may have human source. They flow by no miracle power. It is said of Howard and his wife that they had a passion for seeing happy human faces, and that after her marriage she sold all her jewels that she might the more indulge the luxury. A little of that kind of luxury would not hurt any of us. To see happy human faces, were our hearts right, would be chiefest among delights; the first among efforts, the effort to create them. And many people lay themselves out upon it a good deal, and we hear about rides for the sick, and a day in the country for poor children, and Christmas trees, and visiting the squalid, and it is all well; but we are running into a sentimental philosophy, at the expense of a nearer charity. It is not North Street and Albany Street only that need to be visited, nor Provident Institutions, nor diet kitchens, nor soup-houses, by which the more pressing human wants are met. These things may be as brooks in the way to many a truly needing life, and none would grudge them to honest worth. But you and I have pressing upon us other and nearer duties.

We do not need to be enrolled on committee or made visitors or to cross the street. No man need hunt for his mission. His mission comes to him. It is not above, it is not below, it is not far. The hard and dry and weary way, craving the blessing of the brook, is right here in the lives nearest, at our right hand and our left, and ministries which only we can minister cry out for our doing. We are dazzled or dazed by the thing that gets into reports, makes a cry

in newspaper, shocks public sentiment, rouses general interest; but the great, silent aches and wants, with dumb entreaty pleading for sympathy, weary with waiting, and growing toward strong despair; the neglects of ours in daily, home, and homely duties, which write in their indelible tale, and leave their haggard furrows on the heart,— these, the mission so rarely undertaken, constitute our simple, human duty,— not to *make* happy human faces now and then among the children of misery, but to *keep* happy human faces about us all the time, to see that across the daily path that must have weariness and travail in it some brook shall run its bright and cheering course.

Could we do a better thing for the new year than keep it before our minds that we will not so much seek pleasure in our own lives as to put pleasant things into the lives of others,— the daily lives just around us? It is not a very easy thing to do. It will require great watchfulness and self-control,— a habit we are slow to form, of living by the golden rule. It is much easier to do other things outside, out-doors, which shall attract and satisfy other people, and lull any suspicion that may come to ourselves of other duties. But, if we are really and wisely and wholly to discharge our obligations as men and women, that discharge must lie among the little and the near things; and no great fidelity in things great and far will atone for infidelity here. To be fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, husbands, and wives, in all the full meaning of those relations; to see that the watercourses of truest sympathy and love cross and refresh the daily path; to feel that the whole way of life, narrow or broad, level or steep, bright or

dark, has yet the babble of melody, the shine and the song of your helping love and sympathy and cheering spirit,—I suspect that is to do the best with life, and that the charity or love which so sweetly begins there cannot content itself till its circling and well shall touch and embrace the woe that wants and waits outside.

Get the inner and the nearer graces, and the farther away and outer follow. The heart strikes outward, and carries to every part life. With New Year's salutations for each and all, let us make fair start and see what we can do, not so much to make it a happy year to ourselves as a year happy to others. If we succeed in the one, we secure the other.

Jan. 2, 1876.

XXV.

THE THINGS WHICH REMAIN.

"The things which remain." — Rev. iii., 2.

[Preached Nov. 17, 1872, at the Arlington Street Church, the Sunday following the "Great Fire."]

I do not know how it is that men so generally overlook the value of remainders. In my days of arithmetic, I never quite understood the recklessness with which the master would say, "Throw away the remainder," and in life the little men everywhere set by remainders shows unwise prodigality. Almost it seems as if they had a grudge against the thing that is left, wanted to forget it, thrust it out of sight, instead of trying to discover its value and putting it to use. The taking away of a part is virtually many times the taking away of the whole, so little count is made of what remains. Men are like vexed children, who throw away what they have because they cannot have what they want, or the large class of beggars who refuse the essential thing offered because they cannot have the thing fancied. They gauge what is in hand not by actual merit, but by that artificial standard of desire or whim they measure by. Not what we have our prize, but what we have not our complaint. Everybody has something of Haman's spirit. The thing deprived of outweighs all favors: the things remaining are without

value. Our habit is to exaggerate that thing which is taken, so soon as it is taken,— worse, our habit is to exaggerate that thing, or part of a thing, it is possible to take. Not only thoughtless people, but some who at least give themselves credit for being fairly thoughtful, persistently see the side of loss, as persistently ignore the side of gain, wail over what is taken, and fail to grasp the beatitude in what remains, the more heavenly part. It very seldom happens that the remainder is nothing: it most often is of that better part which cannot be taken away. I remember it in the old nursery rhyme,

"Take the worst, and leave the best,"

and not only that lower thing which we call misfortune, but that higher thing which we call Providence, often acts that way,—takes the worst and leaves the best. It is evidently *the* way. That which remains is intrinsically best, however our more superficial feelings may at first measure it. God seems to have willed no bereavement to be absolute. In his economy, the brighter and broader revealing lies in the remainder left after some going away, even that going away which has seemed to take all hope with it. Moses, the hope of the Hebrews, slept on Nebo, yet the tribes crossed Jordan and possessed the land. Jesus, the hope of the disciples, slept in Joseph's tomb, yet his spirit went out into all the world. Some we loved or leaned upon have gone away: we call them dead, but their dying has been life to us, more left than was taken. The Lord took, but he gave more. So, all down the long line, out of destructions everywhere, not annihilation, but vigor and life. The world's progress, man's growth

through the remainders that everywhere mark the path of destruction and decay,— they the working capital of new civilization or character. Annihilation is for those things only that ought to die. Causes, nations, truths, men, are sometimes riven as the bolt rives the oak; but the very mightiness of disaster seems to evoke a life the sunshine never developed. It astonishes you to know into how small a space life may contract itself. Branches, trunk, and all their brave power may be gone, but, in the far root, other branch and trunk. A spark quick with life, that is enough. Rightly conditioned, it will kindle, will glow, will bless: wrongly directed, it will devastate,— a terrible or a blissful remainder. I think it is told of a brave man on the wrong side in our late war that, finding himself terribly maimed, he wrote to his betrothed, releasing her from her engagement. The answer came back braver than his offer, "If there is body enough left to hold your soul, I will marry you." The remainder of more worth in her sight than everything that had been taken. What were body graces gone, when soul graces were left? In them remaining enough. Something of that same bravery we may at times need, a bravery to start again with seemingly diminished resource, conscious that the soul of resource is still ours. Is it not mistake of ours not to see where the soul of resource lies, to need special revelation of that we should ourselves discover? A man mourns the health gone,— if he only had that! But that he has not. His resource is in the health that is left. Let him be grateful and use that. Another croaks about the years that are past, as if his capital of life were in them. Let him go to work,

and in the years left find capital no by-gone years took away. People a little sick, a little discouraged, talk about days of usefulness as over, themselves as only a burden to others, nobody likes them. Let them stop whining and making others uncomfortable and themselves unhappy, accept the fact, and go to work to make the best out of that which remains. Splendid things these remainders may grow to.

Paul, Augustine, Loyola,—think what the remainders of their lives grew to after the hot mistakes of youth were passed. The friends, the years, the privileges, the hopes, the opportunities of the past, are not the only values. Oftentimes these are exaggerated, oftentimes fictitious, as the years and blessings of childhood are to memory. The value, the soul of resource, is in the friends, years, privileges, hopes, opportunities that remain,—things that never fail resolved men. I find it everywhere that the lowest ebb precedes and prophesies new flood. Histories and biographies tell us that, discoveries and inventions. In school-boy days, I remember we read it as part of a poem on the battle of Bunker's Hill.

"E'en then our fallen fortunes lay
in light."

What men say about its being darkest just before dawn may or may not be true in the universe of nature, but all over the universe of experience we find that the darkest hour of betrayal or defeat retains somehow the germ of a new and brighter hope; and we mark the human eras by the phœnix spirit that springs from ashes. You can crush no vitality. "We still live," men say. That is the only thing a man can

do. Catastrophes, misfortunes, deaths, strip externals only. Souls of things, as of men, remain. Nothing touches them, smell of smoke or breath of flame. Their life is charmed as that of the men in the furnace. Of all life, the germ is immortal. It holds all the future needs, more than any past has seen or foretold. If it remain abundant, life shall come. There was, one time, not a single Hebrew man-child as the prophet thought, except himself, that had not bowed to Baal. Only a tomb was the rally-centre of the Christ's beloved. Behold in the sacred writings the victories of the things that remained, and in our own time mark the rebirth of a world out of the remainder, which through Holland fled from Scrooby village, and planted on Pilgrim Rock seed whose life device of man could not destroy, to which the will of God gives ever-spreading harvest. The germ-life men thought they had killed lived, confounding the wise of the world. God elaborates his great purposes from the little things they forget, out of despised remainders works his sovereign will. The thoughts of many of you since you were last here have been drawn to, absorbed, in the things that are gone. To many, the last week's disaster is a personal thing. It has inserted itself between the very joints and marrow. Your pressing, present sense is *loss*. Your thought has been not so much of the things that remain as of the things that are taken. That is natural, and you cannot help it. In the order of Providence, the sense of loss must come first, only it must not all be that. For it is not all loss to any. Greater the things that remain than the things taken: nothing of real value gone, everything of real value

left. Not a few have been quick to call the fire God's lesson and wrath to a wicked people. I will not take God wholly out of it, because he is everywhere, in all. I believe that he who makes the winds his messengers also makes the flames his ministers. These flames have been his ministers,— not in the way these, his swift traducers, would say, but in ways more consonant with his majesty and honor, not to speak of his care and love. They have been telling some things we have been told many times before, and shall have to be told many times again, before we shall learn or God weary in telling. They are revealing things hidden before, or known only here and there to some wise and prudent, but scattered broadcast now for everybody's picking up. What Boaz ordered his reapers to do, God does for his sufferers. Unexpected handfuls of mercies we glean from the most stricken fields. Broad acres, lately the city's pride and confidence, the chosen place of commerce and traffic and industry, are to-day something more than a wilderness,— and, for beauty, ruin and ashes. Some of you, in the wild havoc of that night, parted from the honorable reward of years of integrity and toil ; and some who had supposed that there was the securest place for the bestowal of earthly goods have learned that nothing is secure from man's accidents, if from God's providence. I will not sit down by your ashes and be mourner with you. I will not try word-painting of scenes of destruction, or grope with you amid glooms. All is not lost. The best remains. All did not go up into the night. The stately edifice, the garnered treasures, the implements of trade and industry, the results of skill and labor,

fabrics and material and art, are gone,— a mighty holocaust ; but the solid earth remains, the standing-place for new activities, all that courage and faith ever need. And more stately will men build, and more rare fabric will they store, and greater treasure will they gather, and broader industries will they protect and reward,— all these coming out of what remains, the foundation untouched for the new building again. At its grossest, most material point, that which remains is greater than that which is taken. The superstructure has passed. The flame consumed it, not by fiat of an angered God, but by fiat of a broken law. The foundation remains, like some men's faith, saved so as by fire. The substance stands. As men say that in the seed lies traced out all the delicate outline of the future tree, as the artist told me that in a jagged piece of marble lay the thing of beauty he had told me of, and he had only to go to work and find it, so in these obliterated streets and choked cellars and fallen walls and faithless safes, and water and ashes and mud, and desolate and hopeless remainder, lies the great mart of the future, the Boston to be.

Before we get into the more directly personal bearing of our topic, look at the city, and remember the things that remain, and thank God,— old historic buildings which even the iconoclastic spirit of this matter-of-fact day idolizes. Bad enough to think of Boston without the Hancock House, but imagine a Boston without the Old South or Faneuil Hall. They remain, and what the flame spared may not hand of man destroy. Our public buildings remain,— churches and schools and libraries and art treasures. The media of

supply of daily food remain, our homes remain. Think of what it might have been. No horror like that of Chicago has come near us,— none of that awful fear for the lives of those we love. To weary and troubled men, the sanctuary of home is yet intact; and, when I think of that one thing, I feel that no tongue can voice the hallelujahs that surge within our grateful hearts.

Besides these material things, notice in the community what remains,— despite hasty words and deeds, raw and excited plans and measures, good sober sense, some possessing themselves, nothing of panic, broad views of future public good, honest pride and self-reliance, active benevolence, self-forgetfulness, and a host of virtues that keep shy under the sunlight, but in the darkness twinkle and glow, and guide and comfort. The aggregate, the average of manhood and of womanhood, is higher. There is a new outgrowth of good-will, and people have surprised themselves as well as others by their endurances and unselfishness and activity of charity and zeal. I don't know. I suppose it is a something hard in me, but I have not felt one whit, as people say they have, the telegrams and speeches and expressions of sympathy and offers of money this side and the other. Had not Boston earned all that, grand leader in every good work that she has been in all these years, sneered at and derided, as so long I have been compelled to hear her, yet in the day of her disaster garnering back to herself the bread she had so thrown to the waters? I may be all wrong, but I haven't felt a touch of sentiment in it all; but as I was reading of one of our firms, burnt out, caring at once for their girls out of employ, and ready to employ other

girls, those very girls in the mean time meeting and resolving not to take the money due them, their separate littles amounting to a sum that might assist, somehow there came over my eyes that which prevented my seeing to the end of the period, and for my manhood I would not have liked to try reading the passage aloud. When a spirit like that remains, God help us and forgive us, friends, if we consent to be mourners over what has been taken away, rather than rejoice at that which remains to bring out the finer qualities of the nature men treat too roughly, too seldom see the divine side of. With such virtue left, with the courage and the cheer and the disposition to assist, the new tie of brotherhood disaster has forged bringing men together as no years of success could, *everything* substantial remains. Mere riches, as all divine and human teaching has assured, have taken flight; but flight has revealed what we had allowed to be concealed,—the value and the permanence of the things really worth possessing. The great possessions are not taken, cannot be. They remain, are revealed, are glorified. In a few words last Sunday, I said that the really great possessions had not been touched. Such always defy time and death. The young man turned from Jesus, sorrowing when he was told to sell what he had and give to the poor; "for he had great possessions." Didn't he mistake? Jesus did not ask him to part with his great possessions. Suppose he had done as Jesus wanted him to, would not his great possessions have remained and been added to? He had kept great commandments from his youth. Were not these and their results beyond

the sum of flock and vintage and granary? And is not it true of every man and woman here to-day and everywhere, whom this disaster has touched, that the smell of its smoke even has not passed on their best possession, that the best they have, the best they are, is the better for it?

We are always speaking of the value of character to ourselves and to others, but only at crises like this do we realize the priceless thing it is. Suppose it possible that some convulsion, some wave of disaster, could have swallowed the character of this city, of the men and women of it, and this day's sun had looked down upon Franklin and Pearl and Summer and Milk Streets standing in all the glory we loved so well, while the people stood a moral ruin, blackened and disgraced before the world: you might call that a disaster. Nothing could repair it. Granite column and bank-vault, raw material, cunning fabric, never could have replaced that loss. There had been no remainder to work with. It was the character under these, behind these, which made their worth; and the same character is to-day the immortal spark that makes ruin and ashes. not eloquent of faded prosperity, but instinct with life and hope. They represented moral worth more than money value. And the well-earned character of our city for mercantile honor and moral probity and out-flowing charity is returning to her usury in the day of her visitation. It is not her prosperity, her energy, her wealth, her misfortune even, that draw the hearts of all sections toward her, and make the wires electric with proffers of good-will, which as a Boston boy, if I may not speak as a Boston man, I trust she may

never be compelled to accept. Character only could do that,— a respect men may keep out of sight or deny in the prosperous day, but which they are glad to let shine out in the night-time of trial. That character is not gone, friends. Our fathers bequeathed it. We have guarded it. May it be our bequest to our children's children. It is to build the new city,— build it in marble and granite and brick and iron,— while it is itself builded newly into the confidence and respect of the world.

What is true of the city is true of every individual. Those of you who suffer most have undisturbed that which is most yours. It is capital for you in the marts of the world, capital for you in the esteem of men. I know there are exceptions, some who rate men only by bank account, society position, political honor, power, place. One I love, suffering misfortune, writes that he has few friends now. Put away the fact that losses make men morbid and sensitive, too many have wrong estimates of values. Thank God, there are foul weather friends, and they are of the best. If we have character, our part, they will not desert us, their part. In certain things you are to be crippled: no crippling here. Mere dollars are going to be at a discount. Character is on the rise. Men see more clearly through the shams society makes them yield to. In character, they detect fine gold without alloy, and they will not forget it. That is to-day at a premium; and there is not a merchant, a laborer, a sewing-girl, who has that, but finds in it to-day a peace that were cheaply purchased at the price of every worldly gain. More than its worth with men is its inward solace and sup-

port. In saddest, silent hours, in despair moments, in weariness and heavy plodding, it shall be the many times comforter, verifying by experience the old hymn words,—

"And, having nothing, yet hath all."

I want now to say a word of a quality everywhere prominent and invaluable. I know how dainty people are as to pulpit language, and I feel how emasculate has pulpit language got to be by yielding to that daintiness. Daintiness of speech in the pulpit has been well-nigh its death. The pulpit should use the best word to express the thing it means, no matter if it can't show a blue-blood pedigree. Courage is a good word and reputable; but there is a quality that is not just it, which such times demand and such times develop, and at such times is good to draw upon. I mean *pluck*. It is courage in homespun, without broadcloth or velvet. We used to get it in army times. A plucky man was a something other than a brave one. In him, ingredients, and a mixture of them, unlike the other. Pluck is a thing of resource, of will, of endurance, as of action. That quality of manhood disaster has never power over. It rises with occasion. The brave man may yield, the man of pluck never.

And I see it everywhere how this thing is up and will abide. I catch it in hand-grasp, in expression of face and voice, in plan for the future, in the very struggles that may for a moment master. I do not think the battle-fields of any nation have seen a heroism truer than that the past week has developed. On roofs, heroes; at hose and pipe, on ladder and amid flame, heroes,—pluck; but among men and women, among

you, heroism not of devotion, but of endurance, such as lifts manhood and womanhood, and makes us care little for theology's descent of our race or science's ascent, grateful only that we can touch quality so near divine. I honor, I bow, I am abashed before the will, resolute to endure, that I have seen,— to endure neither doggedly nor selfishly, but with heart touched to finer issues, self held back, the woes of others remembered. There is a word that even this spirit needs. Somebody says, "The real, stern part of any duty commences with the first positive sacrifice it demands, not in the making up of one's mind to perform it." Who of us that have resolved almost joyously on a hard course of duty but have realized that,— some of us with such force as to make us not coward, but renegade under the first actual pressure? It is one thing to believe in a huge aggregate of duty or resolve, to have a vague sense of something immense to face and determine to face it, and another thing to actually meet the first little detail. It will be likely to floor you. The first hunger or weariness or blood-letting takes all the romance out of the young soldier, and dulls his keen-sensed patriotism. Facts are not only stubborn, but awfully prosaic things. They are like many common-sense people,— very good, but very hard. And the little daily, unexpected, uncalculated-upon detail of hard facts that is going to swarm innumerable and petty as Liliputian hosts upon you, with invisible but exasperating sting,— dear friends, these are to be your trials, here in the dead pull and pressure, when excitement is passed, and every man is gone to his own, and the buoyancy that comes of suffering with many has lapsed into the sense of suffering

alone. I think it were wise at once to face that inevitable truth which all experience verifies, and hold a reserve of power; for it is not one emergency which is yours, but every hour possibly for years will bring up its little loss, and the little thing will be the hard thing. It is there that courage, principle, hope, faith, often fail. It is there that despair comes in, doubt, shame of self,— there that you will need a watchful and stubborn guard. And I think you will find it one of the blessed things that remain,— the only disaster ever reveals to us the blessing,— the power to bear suffering and loss. Friends, God does not send us suffering, discipline, disappointment, but with them, more than they, the power to bear, the power to look serenely, cheerfully, hopefully at the facts as they are, even by slow gradation and increment, rising to the height other men besides Jesus have been lifted into, the height in which the garden-prayer becomes the soul's own will. We have it now almost as a household word what the poet has phrased,

> "Know how sublime a thing it is
> To suffer, and be strong"

I do not know about its being sublime,— I do not think it worth while to consider that,— but I do know that there is a certain satisfying in the strength God gives us to suffer. There may be nothing sublime about it, but there is something for our working purposes better,— encouraging. We do not want to be buoyed by the idea of sublimity as the soldier is nerved by the idea of glory, but to set ourselves at the resolute pull of duty, as sons of God should. Suffering of any sort crushes only those who will to be crushed. It

lifts those who will to be lifted. That which is manifest in the Christ's career of the power to suffer — not to be crushed by, but to resist and rise under, suffering — is no exceptional result, not his only, but ours. To us also is that power which carries through trials and obstacles, and over what threatened to be despairs and defeats writes victory. And there remains ever, over and above all, God, — with no averted face, — God, the comforter and the strength-giver. He never fails. All else gone, he remains; and the more things beside him go, the more he stands revealed.

This is lame and impotent, I know: at God's crises, men's words always are. It is only what I think I get of God that I dare to voice. The occasion is beyond man. The city that on her hills had sat secure, ashes are upon her, and in her streets is desolation. A providence of God, behind the mistake of man, has visited her. The mistake of man wastes, the providence of God renews. From him are the things that remain, and greater are they than the things that are taken. Only will we walk with him, only will we be patient and brave, and the night shall end, as all nights end, in the joy of day. If it be high faith to *see* the arm of God by day, to *feel* it in the gloom, that is the very central essence and self of faith.

Nobody believes that the future is to be less than the past. The after-glory and prosperity of our city is assured. The thing is to tide over these intervening times — days and nights, and worries and cares, the set of things that will delay, and will go wrong — with a good, broad, sturdy, Christian manhood and womanhood. Let me emphasize the last adjective, Christian. If Christianity is any worth, now is its crucial

test to many. I have no doubt as to what it can stand, as to what any of you can bear, standing by it. With that there remains more than enough to carry the weakest and the most sore-pressed through. The grandest opportunity many have ever had to make themselves into broad and hearty manhood and womanhood is before them, an opportunity none may neglect. Already, Christian virtues shine with a calmer, clearer light. Already, men and women see themselves nobler and stronger than they were. Self is less: others are more. Hands are more ready, hearts are more open, souls are more sensitive, more responsive. The wide, tender thing brotherhood is shows itself. Community in suffering begets community of sympathy; and sympathy is expansive, and, once called out, never creeps back to the cold cradle of its birth. With the best of human nature called to the front, with the worst of it crowded back, with courage and strength, and hope and character, and human sympathy, and God, remaining by us, what, really, has been lost? Weigh it, measure it, estimate it! Let us thank God, let us consider and strengthen the things that remain, and take courage. Let our courage be the cheerful courage that is above despairs.

Let us stand in our lot, learn to suffer and to wait; and, dear friends, it takes no prophet and no prophet's son to say that, though there should be no new dawn to a destroyed prosperity, there shall be a dawn brightening toward, glowing into day, in the heart and life of every humblest God's child, who, seeking and clinging to the things that remain, shall try to build himself up into that which God will accept, which thief, rust, moth, flame, convulsion, time, cannot take away.

XXVI.

THE BEST FRUIT THE LAST PLUCKED.

"Two or three berries on the top of the uppermost bough." — ISAIAH xvii., 6.

THAT was a most remarkable polity which Moses had given his people, as remarkable in what it was manward as in what it was Godward.

Of the great men of the ages, he stands foremost. I think we must feel so, when we regard him as a purely historical character, and come to see how it was the fashion, the credence, the superstition of the time to attribute to leaders in action and thought supernatural help. The Greek, the Roman, the Egyptian, the Persian, had their mythologies, their troops of all manner of assisting deities. Their great men were but the media for the transmission of the superior will. In their great enterprises, one and the other deity acted or spoke through or controlled them. In a more marked way, because of the exceptional character of his faith, the Jew regarded his great men; and we have caught our faith from his record and belief. But, more and more, as we become more and more ready to face the difficulties about the old conception, shall we become willing frankly to admit that the great wants and mistakes of the Mosaic law, side by side with its great virtues, go to disprove the idea that Moses acted

and taught only under the inspiration and governance of the great "I AM."

No one who has really looked into the subject will be ready to commit himself to a belief of the Mosaic code, in outline and in detail, as a divine work.

The tender humanity of this code, the regard even for the brute manifest in it, fill one with wonder and admiration. He finds much of the same which he misses out of our ordinary Christianity showing itself in faiths like those of the Moslem and the Persian,—faiths which, unquestionably, have got shaping from contact with the old Mosaic influence. Most wonderful as ubiquitous of peoples, while Christendom has been content to deride and despise and oppress them, they have been, in every onward, civilizing step made by the ages, among the motor powers, suggesting, shaping, controlling, leading, and saving. Some day, and at the hands of the great future, they will receive not the indolent and half-contemptuous dole of pity, but free and full sympathy, admiration, and gratitude. It does not need a Daniel Deronda to show us what is the devout home faith and the tender home life that the great Law-giver enjoined and the people follow. Our Bibles, and all history, show us the same; while, in all his wanderings, amid all his degradations, under all his peculiarities, in reverent fidelity to the instruction given, in steadfast allegiance to God and the duties prescribed to man, the Jew stands without peer in all the world's history. Where the question of fidelity is raised, all Christian peoples must hang their head.

No injunction of Moses was more admirable than that which related to the harvest. It shows how broad

his thought, as his heart. Among a people, many of whom were inevitably to be poor, he desired to cultivate the largest sympathy and charity, to bind together the more and the less prosperous by these cords. The harvests should be thanksgiving times, not to the rich only, but to the needy. It should be the poor man's festival and jubilee as well as the rich man's. The fields were not to be gone over a second time. The gleanings were for the unfortunate and the widow. On the outmost branch of the vine a few grapes, in the top of the uppermost bough of the olive two or three berries, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches, should be left, the poor man's harvest, his ingathering. And so, through changes and through years, the beneficent law ran; and what Boaz did for Ruth, many another did, and many another sad and desolate lot was relieved and blessed.

And the chances were that the poor man got best fruit; for out at the end of the vine and up at the top of the branches, where the fruit lies in the unobstructed sun and wind, the grape would purple and the plump olive ripen as not lower down where thick leaves and interlacing twigs would choke the air and shut off the light and smother the product, that, like all other things, to its perfection requires air and light and room,— "latitude," without which neither fruit nor man, truth nor life, ripen.

The use to which I shall put the text is somewhat this,— to try to make it tell a fact. I think we need to care more about that in all directions and in all things. After we have done what seems our duty, our best, done the most with it, got the most out of it, have ripened

and gathered our harvest, there are left two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, and that, gleaners after ourselves as we all always should be, we shall find that our best is undone, the thing attempted not carried to its legitimate issue, so long as those two or three flaunt in the wind, upbraid our slovenliness and herald our incompleteness. Slovenly and incomplete are we in most of our living: how generally and deeply so, we have little conception.

As men and women, we have a pretty general feeling that we do about all we can do. We pride ourselves on the things done. In the very vague kind of confession we at times make, which we never accept literally ourselves and do not mean that others shall, we accuse ourselves roundly of every manner of shortcoming; but "the miserable sinners" that we call ourselves is more a matter of routine and of rhetoric than of positive conviction. Generally, we assume, with a good deal of comfort to ourselves, that we have done our best, that there is no more to be reasonably expected, no more to be actually accomplished. The boy says it about his lessons, the man about his virtues. The mechanic and laborer and domestic have it to say about their duties and jobs. You never have fault to find at any shortcoming but that is the reply of others to you, of yourself to yourself, and in the larger and graver and more responsible duties of life that is the plea.

I doubt if it be so in truth,—indeed, I know it not to be so. We are never up to our ability. We never live life out to the full, its whole, its parts. Talent, virtue, never have the best of us. There never comes the time when there is no more that we can do. Beyond

where we stop, infinite capabilities lie, a broad domain into which God meant we should enter and possess. Always there are unreached, unachieved possibilities. We halt too soon, fail to pursue, tethered like some domestic animal who must not stray beyond bound, rather than free, as the bird, to range through limitless spaces among most refined and exquisite virtues, which, like flowers of Paradise, were meant to have their ripeness and their fragrance and their beauty this side the eternal city; to brighten and cheer the way, not to welcome and to crown our entering in. We rob ourselves, we rob earth of its best possessions,— reaches of human attainment, the native air and sphere of which is now and here; we attain and keep content in a dull and low life rather than aspire to a life of full proportion and richness and finish. These human capacities are not worked up to their honest, reasonable limit, and we do not guess how near the divine the best humanity may be. I do not mean to say that there has not been too much in business, in study, in statesmanship, in politics, nor deny that men have burned up life in the hot and restless career of its ambitions, displacing vigor and life with decrepitude and death. Even of that overwork there is much less than has been assumed. It is bad working, injudicious working, not overworking that wrecks and slays. I say it of our virtues, of our mental as moral capacities, that we keep them curbed into about what we suppose they should be, never let them out, and compel them, unchecked, to the very uttermost; and so there is this great broad and black and yawning chasm, distressing and benumbing us, between virtue's self and the virtues ourselves attain,

a chasm between man and God. His virtue and our virtue, infinite that might be, not bridged but almost closed. I want to keep my thought to the more personal relations and attitudes of the soul, and of these you will come to own it true that we never push them to possible, to demanded ultimates. I do not suppose that a man ever lifted himself up to a height of virtue, that there did not at the same time come to him a consciousness of other heights possible, and possible for him,—things not only for vision, but for occupation. "The more you do, the more you may," is what we tell children, but it is at that that manhood balks in the higher things. The virtues are not put at their stress, that which is their just exercise. There are two or three berries always at the top of the outmost boughs untouched. Let us see this by example.

In a time of business stagnation like this we now have, the reply that is at once made to every charitable effort is: "It is no use to try to get money now. Our merchants are feeling poor. There is nothing doing. There is no money to be had." And so that very hard road which he who would establish or foster a charity has, at best times, to travel, is badly blocked at the start. When you are leading a forlorn hope, I have found the forlorner the hope, the more the demand for you to lead. If the forlornness do not kill you outright, or make the worst of cowards of you, it inspires you with a confidence that compels victory. The cry all round now is: "It is no use. Everybody is poor, there is no money." I have it direct the past week from some of the prominent dressmakers that they were never so driven, never found it so hard to

please customers, and that dresses were never more elaborate and costly. Unless my eyes deceive me and my knowledge is vain, there is an immense amount of selfish, extraordinary extravagance among the men as the women of this needy time. That there are grave and unwonted economies — some of them borne sweetly and serenely and silently — I know; and, to all such, sympathy and respect and honor. The fact is, friends,— and let us be men enough to own it,— that, even in these straitened times, we all find two or three berries on the top of the outmost branches which we can pluck for the sating of our selfishness. Poor as we may feel, there they are, ready to our craving. The thing we want, that we are going to have, we somehow manage to have the means of getting. The exchequer is not so low but it will honor the draft. The means will be devised to meet the cormorant that craves, covets, and consumes,— shall I add, corrupts? It is always noted that, in seasons of distress, indulgence and extravagance reign. When there are declared to be no means for better, more honorable things, the means are abundant for them.

This is the lower side, the darker view. No time is so good time for the charities as the hard time. The charity that never faileth fails not then. The pinch that a true man feels, he realizes that another must feel, and it thaws him and broadens him; and, while he straitens himself, he remembers the strait of another. Some of the best things that have ever been done by that spirit of charity so generally felt to have its headquarters in our city have been done since the times of shrinkage, uncertainty, and stagnation set in; and I

have no doubt but, poor as people say they are, if to-morrow some great, unquestionable, genuine beneficence were made known, it would be cheerfully and amply and immediately responded to. Inspire people with confidence in the good, the claim, the necessity announced, and they at once begin to look about and see if it be not practicable for them to do something, stripped and poor as they feel; and they always find, and surprise themselves with finding, two or three berries at the top of the outmost branch, overlooked while the harvest was full, that have been hanging there, ripe and rich, till the Lord's need should call for them. I don't know, but somehow this quenchless spirit of humanity, in all but the mean and the stingy and the narrow and the cold, gets a microscopic vision and a great and vital warmth at every cry and pressure of misfortune, and springs up to say, "I am my brother's keeper," and finds the means where under only the ordinary pressure of life; but now it seemed as if no means were possible. No skilful operator so touches the eyes of the blind as the spirit of right brotherhood touches the vision of the soul. No fire-heat so thaws the torpor of the freezing body as the fire-heat of a right humanity thaws the torpid sympathies, compelling the heart to say: "After all, in distresses of others, nothing that I have is mine. Let me be straitened, let me suffer, rather than that they perish."

I think that the handful that Ruth gleaned for Naomi made the sweetest of home-bread,—sweet with a sweetness sweeter than that of the finest wheat. I think that the olive and the grape plucked from the

outmost branches warmed the heart of the eater and helped keep warm the heart of the owner; and that which a man finds he can do for another, after he supposes he has already done all that he can, makes more man of him, thrills him, and broadens and blesses him, takes the ugly selfishness out of him, and stands the manhood in him up straight before his own gaze, without a bend or a falter or a flaw. "More blessed is it to give than to receive," are words that have come to us from the lips of the Teacher,— not through the Gospels, but almost as a chance remembrance of the apostle,— a little waif fraught with richest worth, caught up and borne to the generations for their seeding and harvest, as the winged seeds of fields and gardens are. Every man who honestly gives — not with a fling, but with a sympathy, not with a grudge, but with a gladness, not because he must, but because he loves to, not as a get-off, but as a true giving — tests the veracity of the Christ-word, tastes the beatitude. And it most blesses him whose giving is of the two or three berries on the top of the outmost branches, as it is when the humblest poor divide and subdivide their money with those poorer than themselves; and God, who watches all things, will see to it that the increase of their seed shall not be lost in the future harvests.

Let us take a yet more private and personal, and it shall be a really cardinal virtue. In the multitude of human duties, we may not speak of this and the other as prominent and paramount in necessity. What we want to think about the virtues is our obligation to them all,— even to pluck the two or three berries on the top of their outmost branches.

But for the moment let me present to you the so-much-needed, so-much-neglected virtue, patience. It is a virtue which has a great deal more of the power of endurance than men allow, which we never wait to see fairly out, never come to where there is no more that it can do. Job, our favorite picture and symbol of a patient man, did not see his way to the end of it. He did not exhaust it. There were two or three berries even he did not gather. And when we have borne and forborne to the utter, even the bitter end, with man, with things, with self, with God, as we think, there is yet more that the spirit of patience may bear. And we catch ourselves confessing it the very moment after we have let go our hold of it, and have sent our released, imperious will crashing down in among the courtesies of intercourse or the affections of home. We see that we might have held out yet longer, that it would have been easy to have done it, and that the two or three unplucked berries would have yielded a more luscious fruit than all the before-gone harvest. We begin to be impatient and irritable and unreasonable long before there is the shadow of excuse for it; and they are most so who have kept patient up to a certain point, and then have removed restraint, given it and themselves up. As the waters dribbling through the dam, neglected, pour and tear and sweep and devastate, and carry ruin and wreck, so with the impetuousness that has burst the bounds of patience. It had been better to have been impatient all along than by letting go to have brought, in flood and overthrow, disaster so grave. There are three things to be observed with patience,— to hold in, to hold on, and to hold out.

So with any virtue, with all the virtues. They have a wonderful elasticity. Each one, like charity, covers its multitude. You can go on and on, and still its power holds. There is always something more it can do, some new ground it can occupy, some other work it can accomplish. There is literally no end to its mission. I think what the life of Christ did, over and above all other living, was not the introducing us to new graces of character so much as the making us cognizant of the new reaches to which well-known graces were capable of being strained. As into old words, by his new spirit, he put new life, so into old graces, and made a Gospel seem to be studded with new virtues, as the heavens seem to be studded with new constellations to the novice who first handles the telescope, when it is only the new vision in him. The stars were there. Men did not know them. Only he took old traits, familiar duties, and transfigured them by the way in which he pushed them,— treated them as things not to be carried a certain convenient distance and then to be dropped, or to be stood by, as the soldier stands by his ordered musket at parade rest, but to be carried the more firmly and resolutely from the point of ordinary halt,— carried till the Great Commander should order the laying down of all arms and the rest that comes of victory. It was the two or three berries on the top of the outmost bough that made the difference. Where men left off, he the more zealously worked; what they neglected to pluck, he gathered into the garner, left nothing to the birds or to other men's gleaning,— sowed and reaped and gleaned himself.

So it is again with the bearing of pain, the burden of sorrow. There are two or three berries yet, after we have reached the bounds of supposed endurance. A little holding out shows us that we can bear a little more; and, when that little more is borne, the brave soul, the soul whose courage is "a cheerful courage," no dull despair without hope, finds there is power still to bear a little more. In the old Inquisitions, when brave men died and tortured men would not recant, they relaxed the boot and the screw and the wheel a little, that the man whose pain had mastered consciousness might come to, and save himself by retracting; but the wheel turned again, and the screw wound, and the boot pressed, for the revived man had taken new lease to bear,— there was yet more that he could suffer in the thought of the Master suffering behind him, and the crown that he saw ready to crown him before. And when we come to the great griefs and aches, and, sore-bruised, it seems impossible for one moment longer to bear even a divine will, somehow, before we quite yield, we catch sight of the two or three berries at the top of the outmost bough, and gird anew our wasting powers and cry the old cry, and submit, till the submission surely, slowly, sweetly grows into the acquiescing that brings at one our will with God's.

And so I have given you my reading of the Scripture word, a hint which you may take and apply very broadly for yourselves and very helpfully. What we want to know in life — not to say that we know, but to know as the heart knows beyond peradventure — is that there is a great deal more to life in all directions than we allow, and that we can grow to a great deal

more in life than we do. It is a very much broader, as grander, thing to live than we make it. Virtues and duties cover more demand, and lift us to other levels; and man, instead of the pigmy he is content to be,— "an infant crying in the night," — is created to be colossal, compact, and well-developed every how,— capable, not like fabled Atlas, of carrying the round orb on his shoulders, but of carrying in his life the microcosm of all truth and virtue and endurance, making it the reflex of the all-perfectness which flashed out for a little time from Judea and Galilee, leaving not darkness again at its going away, but the remainder of influence to lighten, to lead, to sanctify, to save.

By the wayside or on the edges of the autumn woods, left by truant boys or the gatherers for the market, at the top of the outmost branches the red berry sways to and fro. On the outmost branches of apple-trees hang the remainder glories overlooked by the gatherer, greeting the eye, tempting the palate, as not those carefully garnered at the foot. A savory imagination invests them with a desire that the ready-to-hand does not provoke. They are both the remainder and the record of harvest, the mute "Well done!" In the autumn of life, one sees all along, swaying and ruddy, out at the end of topmost branches, ripe fruits which he might have gathered in to himself by only more of persistence and courage. The best things are not the things harvested, but the things ungarnered, the things beyond where he stopped work; and only could he go gleaning over his whole life, into the treasury of God, as well as of his own satisfaction, what other harvest would he gather! In some things, he may yet; but it

is for the young to remember that the Lord of the harvest asks of his workers that they be gleaners too, and that the two or three berries, the very outmost and uttermost, be brought in with the rest, that, in the taking of the account, it may be seen that theirs has been thorough work,— the ploughing, the planting, the reaping, and the gleaning.

Nov. 26, 1876.

XXVII.

OUR YEARS.

"The days of our years."— PSALM XC., 10.

THE Psalmist speaks of the days of our years as being about so many. It is a time-measure that he is giving us. And a very solemn measure it is, because it is the suggestion of the limit beyond which one cannot expect that the days of his years shall take him, or, if he do, that it is to be at the expense of labor and sorrow. Somewhat sombre the words are, and I think paint the picture a little darkly; for sometimes the best power and beauty of a life are the climax and finish that come after the threescore and ten have passed,— the halo years, as we not infrequently find them in a serene and beautiful age, the ripened coloring of the time behind, mellowed and enriched by the mingling with foregleams of the everlasting time before.

The days of our years! The phrase has been telling itself to me for a long while, nor have I been well able to get my thought beyond the phrase. Do you not sometimes find that a compact form of words, embracing a full truth, will arrest your attention and impress you with majesty and weight, with force and truth, with vast, thorough completeness, so as to cut off, to forbid anything more than their repetition, while you are filled with, possessed by a great conviction, voiceless, lan-

guageless? There are many texts of Scripture one hesitates to handle, to enlarge upon, which one attempts to speak of in vain, so mighty are they, so inclusive, so exhaustive, so all in all, so wide, so deep, so beyond shaping into words,—and these the most satisfying, the most nourishing, the most tenderly cherished, reiterating themselves to us, and leaving us in the great silence that is not mere dumb void, but thick-peopled with unutterable emotion, belief, satisfying. I feel as if this, our to-day text, preached itself through its sharp terseness more directly to our convictions than any enlargement I can give it; and that to sit here, as our good friends the Quakers would, in silence, pondering the few, full words, were of more value, that for each one to be his own preacher were to his better good, than only to glean after such words as the preacher may be able to drop. The plummet that any one may drop into any other one's soul is many fathom short of that which each may drop into his own.

It is very difficult, under whatever mood of mind, to sit down and look justly at the days of one's years, to get at one's unbiassed impression, so much inevitably we surge one side or the other of the exact line of the truth.

One hardly knows what to say of them, or when he begins to say does not know where to end. It is as if one were looking into a mist to recall, if he cannot see, the way he has come; to shape, where there are no definite landmarks, the way he is to go. One gets bewildered as he repeats and re-repeats, so vast is their suggestion of what has been, what has failed to be, their immense, their momentous doings and undoings

and misdoings. Wordsworth says that we come trailing clouds of glory, and that heaven lies about us in our infancy; and Job has it that man is born to trouble; and theology has it that he is born in sin and is sinful altogether, his days few and evil, and under that conviction generations have shivered as they have come and gone, the cold chill of such belief unnerving the better thing they would love to be. We need something other than either or than all such teaching, to have some thought of the days of our years somewhat more wholesome, more true than the word of either modern or ancient poet, or any theology.

The days of our years, looked at as time, are days of a first feebleness, when innocence is only ignorance, a negation of virtue, where sleep, mutter, burst the embryonic passions,—days in which the child prophesies of the man in part, in which, whatever trail of glory comes with it soon gets merged and commingled with things not heavenly, and the great spirit struggle begins. Then, the days of our years are growing days, expanding days, in which, under the glow of the morning sun, we put away the child, put out strength by pruning as by spreading, develop into our earlier manhood. Then they are maturing days, days of drill, experience, duty, when the great subject in every heart, though it never be outspoken, is life, what to do with it, what to be in it, what to make of it, when we would welcome the egress of all low as the ingress of all high, yet are swept from the sheltering rock of our better desire by the strong, swift currents that eddy about us, and ever and anon, in some moment of fiercer swirl, are swept from our protection and hurried within the embrace of

the vortex that remorselessly forbids our landing again, and keeps us within the hurrying eddy; and then they are the silvered days of age, of retrospect, of waning, and of waiting.

What the days of our years, looked at as character, to any of us are it is easy enough to declare. The verdict is immediate and unanimous. If it should find voice from you as I speak, it would be without dissent. The good man, the bad man, the careful and thoughtful, the careless and thoughtless, the earnest as the indifferent, — each and every would say they have been unsatisfactory. Looking them over cursorily, thoroughly, "I am not satisfied with them," we all say inside, where speech so much seems more to our conscience and consciousness than when it gets sound, losing the sacredness of power as it puts off the sacredness of silence. The most self-satisfied person loses every particle of self-satisfaction, as he answers before his own soul what the days of his years have been,— what he has been in them, with his obligations, his opportunities, his abilities; how he has met divine command and human expectation; how he has answered his own aspirations; with what measure he has filled his time; of what material builded his existence; how fashioned, fed his soul. As the leper drew the cloth about his lip and went wandering in solitary places, startling the unwary traveller with the wailing monotone, "Unclean! unclean!" so the soul, wandering solitary amid the relics of its past, startles itself by the hopelessness of the cry that unbidden invades its silences,— unsatisfied, unsatisfied. "Vanity, vexation, weariness, dross, nothing," in our agony we cry; and the wail of our despair

drowns the promptings of our hope. But despairs never win the kingdom of heaven. To despair is to be coward, renegade. It is the crime of an alien, not the attitude of a son.

No one will, I suppose, be tempted to contradict me when I assert of the days of our years that they are days of struggles. So men are wont to esteem them. Call life whatever else you will, it is a struggle; call man whatever else you please, he is a wayfarer amid snares and pitfalls, opposed by secret and by open foes, with weight upon him and toil before him to keep a narrow track through a broad country, over which storms sweep, and blinding lights, alternating with midnight darkness, dazzle and confound. Poets and painters join with Scripture and experience to show life to us as a struggle. We who spend our summers by the sea are familiar with that peculiar troubling of the water which tells of the pressure and crowd and struggle for existence beneath, as the lesser fish attempt to escape the jaws of the stronger enemy; and everywhere in crowded cities and countries, it has been in history, it is in observation, the struggle of the many not for the right to live, so much as for that support to life without which the right is little. Everywhere, in the waters beneath, in the air around, in the existence about us, in savage, in civilized as in animal and insect life, first, always, last, this strife. Men call it part, product of a primal curse. I call it part, a step in development, outgrowth, ripening, something in the progress which is to ripen ultimately into order and quiet and harmony and completeness. And this struggle is not confined to the lower species, ts, to

fish, to beasts, to insects, to primordial germs, not to that outer life of man which after threescore years and ten is rounded by a sleep.

It follows man into the deeper life of his soul, where the aspiring is not for the meat that perishes, the substance which is temptation to the moth and the rust and the thief, but for the higher, the divine life. That life of Jesus — which was no brilliant meteor flashing across a world's amazement, but the established light at the zenith for every generation's blessing — was no exceptional dower of a parental love, or miracle,— witness to an exceptional ambassador,— but outgo, outgrowth of a struggling soul, whose fealty drew him back into the infinite bosom whence he issued; whose strengths were struggles issuing into victories; whose completed, harmonized being grew by and because of struggle into that so fair transfiguring, which before the wakened gaze of all true spirits glistens with a more exceeding whiteness than did his living body, what time Moses and Elias talked with him before drowsy and wondering and misunderstanding disciples. As fair buildings, under wise designings of the architect and the accurate cunning of the mechanic, grow in beauty and proportion and strength out of uncouth stones, unsightly mortar, and stubborn lumber, out of brawny muscle and unseemly sweat of ignorant and unsavory workmen, out of the struggles of man against harsh and unyielding conditions, so is the symmetry of every human life builded out of man's struggles, only he submit to the plan of the great Architect, only work he as God's workman, and fitly clip and square and frame together his raw material. It is not the swift-

growing mushroom, which, while the dews wake and watch, grows to its perfection, that stands head of God's great plantage, but the century-grown tree, that has struggled against storm and wind, and heat and cold, and wet and dry, and light and dark; and no swift-grown, carefully tended soul is type and excellence of the true man, but that scarred and furrowed by the ultimate defeats and victories, despairs and hopes of the struggles which God plants before his prize, as he plants thorns before his rose.

It is not only that God does not let one sparrow fall to the ground without him, but not one good thought, feeling, purpose, deed. Our smiles, our tears, our prayers, our hopes, our efforts, are all numbered, as well as the hairs of our heads. The grass for to-morrow's oven is not alone clothed, but every righteous intent; and we are little of faith, if we do not comprehend it. Nothing that is genuine is naked, fruitless. The struggle that almost costs your life, which prostrates your very soul, which draws the thick curtain of darkness that you feel to joint and marrow, though it seem to have no adequate issue, is not void, is not lost. It is an immortal integer in the life you would grow to. It is not void, it is not vain, it does not return upon you empty. Trust God for that, and turn to struggle again, not cast down, not in despair, not to murmur, doubt, give all up, but to continue the pilgrim's plodding way, conquering the opposition, removing the obstruction, toiling along the plain, struggling up the height, sure that every well-intended endeavor lessens the weight and the length, while it brings nearer to that goal, whose this side ends all struggle, whose

other side begins reward. For you, for all, struggle is the day's duty. The days of our years must be that. Accept the law, and do your best under it, with no repining at unattained result. Result is attained at once, and in every active effort, though you cannot see, measure, gauge it. Faith is your need, not sight. You do not, you cannot see result, for you are only the sower. It is the reaper who knows results, not the man who stalks over rough earth, and casts the seed into the open and hungry furrow, but he who garners, when the suns have left their golden smile upon ripened ear or fruit. Who are we that we should demand to know the product of these days of our years? The demand on us is faithful sowing, each day's toil, conscience work that we may earn conscience wage.

It is ours — as the workman of the spring — to be steadfast, enduring, seeking each day the means by which to grow toward the higher life: it is God's, as the harvestman, to stand at the gate in at which the increase goes, and take account of result, and charge it in his book of reckoning. It is not ours to quarrel with conditions, but to meet and answer them; to fill, being full even with the humblest elements of the higher life; to accept the fertilizing helps of discipline and experience, of providence and life, by which they shall germinate and grow, and ripen into the desired consummation. For, if life be struggle, it is struggle as the law of growth. Better than the fact of struggle in these days of our years is the fact that struggle never dies out in struggle, but takes new form in growth, not so much a resurrection of that which once has been as a prolonging into farther life of that which

is. Struggle is one law of being, but not a dead, fruitless law. Without it, only stagnation, death. With it, possibility, growth, life. We murmur at, we quarrel with, what we call destiny. We reluct at discipline, and refuse our shoulders to the yoke. These are the conditions of our being: refused, souls die; accepted, they live; spurned, life becomes, amid all painted pleasures, dry, juiceless, withered,—and worse, not only hopeless of, but incapable of desiring as of reaching noble ends. Embraced, they show themselves—what Jesus was to them on the way to Emmaus, even while their eyes were holden, and they knew him not—the Saving Power. While we may, one way, say of struggle what Arnold in his great poem says of sorrow: struggle is

> "Shadow to life, moving where life doth move;
> Nor to be laid aside until one lays
> Living aside, with all its changing states,—
> Birth, growth, decay, love, hatred, pleasure, pain,
> Being and doing,"—

another way, in the same author's words, we may speak of struggle as doing its work upon us and within us

> "Till all the sum of ended life,
> All that total of a soul,
> Which is the things it did, the thoughts it had,
> The self it wove, with woof of viewless time
> Crossed on the warps invisible of acts,—
> The outcome of him on the universe,—
> Grows pure and sinless."

To grow pure and sinless! What pearl of price would not one sacrifice for that? For what gem of so pure a ray serene as the soul made lowly-wise by the noble living which ripens into the more and more in

him who, wiser than the knight of old, refusing to judge the shield by the side of brass it presents, rides round, and finds the obverse glittering with pure gold, accepts not the dark and frowning side of discipline, but holds it till he can see the benign intent and extract the blessing? Men go mourning all their days, and speak of the universe of God as a valley of shadows and tears, and lose the whole significance, as magnificence, of the culture God has established for us; and we graduate out of this his school not with the honors, ripened in manhood and ready to be saint, but puny and enfeebled and dissatisfied and sour, earth and its teachings having never lifted us to a conception of the things of an immeasurable glory, which he becomes capable of possessing who works mightily the will of God while, mightily, the will of God works in him. Say of it as we will, the struggle of the soul for its existence always carries with it a sense of satisfaction, though it see not positive award. Every fidelity has that much. Beside, behind, independent of award is it, a something that gives a great content, that makes a sure joy, that upholds and cheers, even while the battle is waged and the sore-pressed spirit struggles against the mustering of heavy odds. It is not when the night comes and he gets his penny of award at the hands of the master that the true workman has his joy and content. He does not have to wait for them; but, as every honest blow in the burden and heat of the day tells of honest work, they follow, consequent of cause. It is not as the victory-shout succeeds to the deafening roar of cannon that the exultation leaps to the heart of the soldier; but that is part with every fierce and stern

moment of conscious discharge of duty. It is not as we grasp prizes, wear laurels, receive plaudits, that the great surges of satisfaction come, but in the moments of devotion and fealty, while the strife goes, the end is unattained, the day uncertain. Socrates claimed to be always in communion with his demon, his guardian spirit. Every man has his attending guardian, which at the moment of true endeavor, even when sorest pressed and visibly accomplishing least, upbears him, and puts new and redoubling energy into his spirit.

The days of man's years are not mere years of compelled endurance: he is not a moping, tottering, unhoping burden-bearer, but, inspired by convictions of his duty, as God's child, conscious of fealty whatever of momentary dereliction creep in now and then, he grows day by day, by and through his struggles, against adversities and evils without, propensities and passions within, singing silent hallelujahs in his heart, even as the toiling laborer whistles at his task, or the sailor, tugging at anchor or at rope, lightens the strain upon his muscles with snatches of cheery song. It is a great guerdon of God that we are not carried to the skies on beds of ease, but that every man's sky is reached through perversities and antagonisms such as would break one only a man, such as make a son of God. If at the Jordan Jesus had asked that the cup might pass from him, fainting at its first presentation, the evil wiles that clustered about his early manhood never had fled from him. Beginning there the never-intermitted struggle, his perfected manhood — manhood grown out of the struggles of the days of his years — uttered only the grandly qualified prayer of so

rich experience, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt!" Such divine mastery was there through the trials he has borne!

The kingly warrior, in the heat of the battle, is said to have seen in the clouds above him the glorified symbol, and its hallowing legend, "By this conquer." Upon every cloud, in our every encounter with which these days of our years are checkered, each one may find the same symbol, illumined by the same.

They are his stimulus and hope, whatever the peril of his fight. It is faith in the spirit of that which the emblem typifies that consecrates struggle, that out of struggle compels victory, and by victory, growth. The days of the years of a man's life are growing years, if he so will. Growth is not through grace, divine gift; but growth is through struggle, human fidelity, the shaping and training one's self by and because of what one calls hard things. It is the mission of hard things to prevent the soul from losing itself amid the littlenesses of ordinary life; to exalt it into that power and might which, without fear or trembling, shall enable one to secure to himself things high, pure, noble, enduring, to run with patience his race, and finish his course with joy.

And, if we are to regard the new days of the new year as the renewal of struggle, let us learn the other wisdom, and regard them as also the renewal of hope. Hope should be never dead. It is immortal. Does not the poet say that it "springs eternal"?

The past is a record: you cannot help, alter that. What is writ is writ. The best that you can do with most of it is to bury it and forget it. At any rate, get

the tease and fret out of it. It can be only healthy to you so. The future is an opportunity; and, as the old monks used to write new words over old and once-used parchments, I think we may hope, in the days of the years to be, to write out some of the sad things of the days of the years that have been by the better thing we grow to. If we cannot expunge the past wholly from the tablets of memory and being, we can write upon the fading page a brighter and braver record. In a true human life there is never place for long despondency, much less for despairs, for regrets, penitence, resolve, never for suicides,— those moral, spiritual suicides men unconsciously commit, when they allow themselves to be overcome by the struggles that were never sent as masters, tyrannies, only to be servants, means to victories and growths.

Those of you who chanced to be abroad at the midhour on the last night of the year must have felt the beauty. The storm was over, the air was still, the earth, a calm white, lay and rested beneath the calmer blue. Stately stars kept silent watch; and a silver moon walked as queen through the great space above, bathing the broad, untrodden white with floods of light. And this peace, this beauty, was but the outgrowth of struggle, what the storm and contention of the day had culminated in. And so no calm but out of storm, no growth but out of struggle, fierce pains of birth, fiercer conflicts of experience, growth by these, then peace.

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